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A CHRISTMAS CAROL

THE WRECK OF THE GOLDEN MARY

RICHARD DOUBLEDICK

THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

EDITED FOR SCHOOL USE BY

EDMUND KEMPER BROADUS, A. M.

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INTRODUCTION

The story of Charles Dickens's life is a story of bitter hardship and triumphant achievement, of high courage and tender love. Thackeray said of *A Christmas Carol* "It is a national benefit, and to every man or woman who reads it a personal kindness," and the description is not inapplicable to the life of its author.

Charles Dickens was born, the second of eight children, at Landport, a suburb of Portsmouth, February 7, 1812. Two years after his birth his father, John Dickens, who was in Government employ as a clerk in the Navy Pay Office at Portsmouth, was transferred to Chatham, and here the family spent the next nine years. In Chatham Charles was sent to school first to an establishment in Rome-lane, and afterwards to a Mr. Giles, under whose care he received the only formal education he valued in later life. The future author does not seem to have been a very apt student, however, and he was too weak and sickly to enter into the companionship of boys of his own age. As a result, he was left to his own resources. In a house in Chatham where five of his boyhood years were spent he found in an old spare room a little collection of books. "From that blessed little room *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, *Humphrey Clinker*, *Tom Jones*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Don Quixote*, *Gil Blas*, and *Robinson Crusoe* came out, a glorious host, to keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time,—they, and The

Arabian Nights and *Tales of the Genii*,—and did me no harm; for, whatever harm was in some of them, it was not there for me; I knew nothing of it—every barn in the neighborhood, every stone in the church, and every foot of the churchyard, had some association of its own, in my mind, connected with these books, and stood for some locality made famous in them.”

His imagination, stimulated by such stirring reading, soon sought to express itself in creative writing, and nothing less ambitious than a tragedy, *Misner, The Sultan of India*, was the first recorded product of his pen. More indicative of the spirit that was in him was his cleverness as an impromptu story-teller, his aptness as a singer of comic songs, and his interest in conducting a miniature theater which an older cousin had painted for his entertainment.

In 1823 the family moved to London, and the eleven year old boy got his first glimpse of the streets he was to know so well. At once they became a passion with him. With Dickens, as with Scott, it is interesting to see how unmistakably the child is father to the man. The boy of Edinburgh, like the boy of Chatham and London, spins yarns almost before he is out of petticoats, but the field of the one is the land of romance, while that of the other (the romantic *Misner* to the contrary notwithstanding) is the gaudy stage of his painted theater and the crowded purlieus of the metropolis. “To be taken out for a walk into the real town, especially if it were anywhere about Covent Garden or the Strand, entranced him with pleasure. But most of all he had a profound attraction of repulsion to St. Giles’s. If he could only induce whosoever took him out to lead him *through Seven Dials*, he was supremely happy. ‘Good Heavens!’ he would exclaim. ‘What wild visions of prodigies

of wickedness, want and beggars arose in my mind out of that place!"**

It was such associations and impulses as these that were training the boy for his vocation. The streets indeed promised to be his only school, for with the move to London, money matters went from bad to worse with John Dickens, and as the family fortunes declined, the boy grew daily more unkempt and neglected. The climax of degradation came with the father's incarceration in the Marshalsea. This was the prison in which, according to the infamous laws of the time, the bankrupt must be confined, either until he paid his debts or until he went through the legal steps necessary to obtain the benefit of the Insolvent Debtor's Act. When the father went to the prison, the mother and younger children took up their residence also within its bounds; and Charles, after every family possession had been pawned and starvation stared him in the face, at last found a position in a blacking warehouse at a salary of six shillings (about \$1.50) a week. The warehouse was a tumble-down hovel. The boy's work was to cover and label the tins of blacking. His associates were the most uncouth of street-waifs, and his habitation a wretched childrens' lodging house. At dawn he would go to the Marshalsea, hang about until the gates were open, and breakfast with his parents and brothers. These breakfasts and his Sunday visits to the prison were the only ties which bound him to what passed for a home. For the rest, he was like the veriest outcast of the London streets.

"I know I do not exaggerate unconsciously and unintentionally the scantiness of my resources and the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling or so were given me by any one, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that

*Forster-Gissing, *Life of Dickens*. Lond. 1903.

worked from morning to night with common men and boys, a shabby child. I know that I tried, but ineffectually, not to anticipate my money, and to make it last the week through by putting it away in a drawer I had in the counting house, wrapped into six little parcels, each parcel containing the same amount, and labelled with a different day. I know that I have lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond."

This year of misery, abject and hopeless though it seemed, Dickens in later years could count as one of the most potent of his life. The boy's weak body grew strong under the stress of necessity; his sympathies were broadened by intimate contact with destitution of all sorts; his wonderful powers of observation, keen even in his childhood, caught and retained with photographic exactness everything that was picturesque and appealing in his daily life: His mind was like a sensitized plate, ever exposed, ever renewed. Nothing escaped him, nothing once caught was lost to him. The squalid life of the Marshalsea was to live itself over again in the adventures of *Pickwick*, in the woes of *Micawber*, in the long-drawn out misery of the *Dorrits*. His blacking factory companion, *Bob Fagin*, was to come to life in the pages of *Oliver Twist*. The slatternly lodging-house keeper was to see the light again as *Mrs. Pipchin* in *Dombey and Son*. The maid-of-all-work in the prison was to become the marchioness in *The Old Curiosity Shop*—and every hovel and every by-way took its place in the stage-setting of some unforgettable scene of the novels.

The year 1824 saw a change for the better in the boy's fortunes. A small legacy enabled his father to compound with his creditors and move out of the Marshalsea. Chas

was sent to school for two years to the establishment of a Mr. Jones of Granby street, where the lad, if he did not profit much in things scholastic, at least added to his gallery of types for future use. In 1826, when the crowded years of his life numbered but fourteen, he began again to earn his living, this time as clerk in an attorney's office in London. Here, with more leisure and a slightly larger wage, he read assiduously at the British Museum and studied shorthand to fit himself for the work of a parliamentary reporter and journalist. At nineteen he entered upon this new calling, serving in the employ of various papers until his twenty-fourth year.

Meanwhile he was being fitted in the best possible way for his future work. His experience in the law gave him the material which he was to use to such advantage in his pictures of the eccentricities of the legal profession and the tedious and tape-ridden processes of the courts. His parliamentary reporting enlarged his horizon, and afforded him an opportunity to study, if but externally, men of a higher class than he had known before. Most invaluable of all, his service as a journalist gave scope and training to his powers of observation, taught him wisdom in selection, in short, put him to doing as a business what he had been doing and was to do all his life *con amore*, making capital out of the hopes and fears, the loves and hates, the simplicities and oddities of "the man on the street."

In a speech made thirty years later to an assembly of newspaper men, Dickens paid tribute to this phase of his career—its educative value, its excitement and charm. "I have pursued the calling of a reporter under circumstances of which many of my brethren here can form no conception. I have often transcribed for the printer, from my shorthand notes, important public speeches in which the strictest

accuracy was required, and a mistake in which would have been to a young man severely compromising, writing on the palm of my hand, by the light of a dark lantern, in a post-chaise and four, galloping through a wild country, and through the dead of the night, at the then surprising rate of fifteen miles an hour. Returning home from exciting political meetings in the country to the waiting press in London, I do verily believe I have been upset in almost every description of vehicle known in this country. I have been in my time belated in miry by-roads, towards the small house forty or fifty miles from London, in a wheelless carriage with exhausted horses and drunken postboys, and have got back in time for publication. These trivial things I mention as an assurance to you that I never have forgotten the fascination of that old pursuit. The pleasure that I used to feel in the rapidity and dexterity of its exercise I never faded out of my breast. Whatever little cunning hand or head I took to it, or acquired in it, I have so retained that I fully believe I could resume it to-morrow, very little the worse from long disuse. To this present year of my life..... I sometimes beguile the tedium of the moment by mentally following the speakers in the old way; and sometimes, if you can believe me, I even find my hand going on the table-cloth, taking an imaginary note of it all." And elsewhere he wrote: "To the wholesome training of severe newspaper work, when I was a very young man, I constantly refer my first successes."

But skillful as Dickens had become as a journalist, his powers were already seeking larger and more satisfactory forms of expression. It is significant of his type of mind that he should have made an effort at this point of his career to go upon the stage. From his childhood days of *miniature theater* and the comic song, the actor's career had

ascinated him. His few school successes had been in locution. In his brief span, he had already played many parts on the stage of life, and always, it would seem, with that sense of the pictorial, of the exits and the entrances, that power of detachment, of seeing himself objectively in his environment, which made the step to the professional actor's life but a short one. Luckily, however, a brief illness deferred his plan, and before it could be put into execution, Dickens had found himself.

Of his manner of entrance into the glories of authorship, the author tells in the preface to *The Pickwick Papers*. His first effusion, *A Dinner at Poplar Walk*, (afterwards published as *Mr. Minns and his Cousin*), addressed to the editor of the "Monthly Magazine," was "dropped stealthily one evening at twilight, with fear and trembling, in a dark letter box, in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet Street," and when it appeared in all the glory of print, he "walked down to Westminster Hall and turned into it for half an hour," because his eyes "were so dimmed with joy and pride that they could not bear the street and were not fit to be seen there."

This first success was not sufficient to warrant him in giving up his work as a reporter, but for the next two years he followed up his first sketch with others in similar vein, adopting in the course of time the pen name Boz, borrowed from his brother Augustus, whom Charles, in honor of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, had nicknamed Moses. This, "facetiously pronounced through the nose became Boses, and being shortened, became Bōz." In 1836 these sketches were collected and published in book form under the title, *Sketches by Boz, Illustrative of Every Day Life and Every Day People*. "Every day people"—so promptly did Dickens emphasize his choice of the material in which he was to do his great work.

The *Sketches by Boz*, with illustrations by Cruikshank an admirable pen-artist whose name was always thereafter to be associated with Dickens, attracted a good deal of attention, and opened the way for the author's first great success, *Pickwick*. This story, if story it may be called grew out of a projected series of comic drawings of cockney sporting life to which Dickens had been asked to give reason for existence in the shape of humorous sketches. He demanded from the publishers—and received—a larger freedom of plan in what he should write, selected as the cognomen of his hero the name of a famous old coach proprietor of Bath, surrounded Mr. Pickwick by a group of characters conceived in a spirit of good humored satire and exaggeration, and carried the group in a succession of desultory rambles through England. The book was published, as was the custom of that day, in numbers, and, as the successive issues appeared, it did not take the public long to discover that in the creator of the Wellers, of Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Snodgrass, of Mr. Winkle and the rest of that inimitable company, the nineteenth century had found its greatest humorist.

The year of the appearance of the first half of *Pickwick* 1836, may therefore properly be taken as the turning point in Dickens's fortunes, and the beginning of his career as a writer of fiction. He married, in the spring of this year Catherine Hogarth, daughter of a fellow worker on the paper in which most of the Boz sketches had been published and upon his return to London after the honeymoon, gave up reporting and set himself to meet the demand which *Pickwick* had created.

To the mass of readers who had held their sides over the reflections of Sam Weller and the credulity of Mr. Pickwick *Dickens's* second novel must have come as an extraordinary

surprise. *Oliver Twist* (1838) had its share of humor, but comedy was everywhere subordinated to the deep feeling of a man whose own boyhood was still fresh in his mind, and who was mighty to avenge for others what he had suffered himself. It was the year when Charles Dickens was a waif among other waifs that furnished the text for *Oliver Twist*, and the story of little Oliver, 'prenticed to a pickpocket, and surrounded by companions who were children in years but old in wickedness, was told with grim realism. There was no need for Dickens to point the moral or sacrifice his art by sermonizing. It was enough simply to tell the story of these pathetic little outcasts to arouse humane and thoughtful people everywhere to the establishment of reform schools and societies for the protection of children. *Oliver Twist* was the first of the long line of English "purpose-novels," and in that the narrative did not distort the truth to further the ends of reform, it is no disgrace to the novelist's art to call it so.

Oliver Twist served not only to enhance Dickens's reputation as a novelist, but also to put him in a position perhaps even more honorable—a position in which his later novels confirmed him—as a great social reformer. Similarly reformatory in purpose is *Nicholas Nickleby*, which was written along with *Oliver Twist* and published in the following year. In preparation for this novel, the author made a special study of the cheap schools of Yorkshire to the evils of which his attention had already been called. The result in Dotheboy's Hall, presided over by the unforgettable Mr. Squeers, did much to ridicule the system out of existence.

At this time, Dickens's fertility of invention and physical endurance were unexampled. He was keeping several novels going at once; he was the recipient of much more social attention than he liked; he was taking part in amateur

theatricals; he was pouring forth a flood of sketches and reviews; he was a voluminous correspondent; and at night, with a day's work comprehensive enough for three men behind him, he would wander restlessly through the streets of London, covering fifteen or twenty miles at a stretch, feeding his insatiable appetite for excitement, and registering every quaint face and odd phrase upon the tablets of his memory. "There never was a man so unlike a professional writer," wrote the Irish novelist, Percy Fitzgerald; "of tall, wiry, energetic figure; brisk in movement; a head well set on; a face rather bronzed or sunburnt; keen, bright, searching eyes, and a mouth which was full of expression. . . . He had, indeed, much of the quiet resolute manner of command of a captain of a ship. He strode along briskly as he walked; as he listened his searching eye rested on you, and the nerves in his face quivered, much like those in the delicately formed nostrils of a finely bred dog. There was a curl or two in his hair at each side which was characteristic; and the jaunty way he wore his little morning hat, rather on one side, added to the effect. But when there was anything droll suggested, a delightful sparkle of lurking humour began to kindle and spread to his mouth, so that, even before he uttered anything, you felt that something irresistibly droll was at hand."

With his load momentarily lightened by the completion of *Nicholas Nickleby*, Dickens began a serial publication entitled *Master Humphrey's Clock*. The desultory sketches of this periodical soon began to take shape in a connected narrative and the outcome was the *Old Curiosity Shop* (1840), with its pathetic story of Little Nell. This was followed in 1842 by *Barnaby Rudge*, with which *Master Humphrey's Clock* was discontinued.

In the same year the author made a trip to America, where *he was at first welcomed with almost frantic admiration, and*

afterwards roundly abused for his advocacy of an International Copyright Act.* Returning to England he published a volume of *American Notes* (1843) which would have been perhaps a trifle less caustic had it not been for the Copyright episode. He followed this volume by *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843), part of which gives a savage picture of pioneering in the western United States. But if the American part of the book is marred by an unworthy animus, the English portion is Dickens at his best. Better characterization, novelist has never effected than the hypocritical Pecksniff and the mean-spirited and vulgar Sairey Gamp, nor better group effects than that where the relatives of old Martin gather at the news of his illness to speculate and quarrel over their prospects of inheritance; and the climactic scene where old Martin himself revives enough to balance the scales of justice. The year of *Martin Chuzzlewit* saw also the projection of the series of Christmas stories, of which the *Christmas Carol* was the first and most successful.

The strain under which Dickens lived was beginning to tell on even his extraordinary vitality, and he sought rest in Italy, missing intensely meanwhile the stimulus of the crowded London streets. In 1845 he returned only to impair his newly recovered strength by an abortive attempt to establish a daily newspaper. Again he went abroad, first to Switzerland and then to France, beginning during his sojourn *Dombey and Son* (1848), memorable chiefly for the sad story of Little Paul and the humors of Captain Cuttle. Returning to England, he threw himself once more into his accustomed activities, and added to his burdens by under-

*At this period, many American publishing houses profited by the absence of legal restriction and pirated popular English works at will. Dickens, as the most successful novelist of the day, was the largest loser by the lack of such an Act.

taking another periodical. The new publication, "Household Words," proved more successful than its predecessor and became the vehicle for many of the best of his minor writings.

The turn of the century brought with it the book which is generally considered the author's masterpiece. Early in his career Dickens had written a fragment of autobiography but had not sought to publish it. Now the idea came to him to vary the form of his novels by writing in the first person, and this suggested the use of the autobiographical fragment. The result was *David Copperfield* (1850), the story of Dickens's early life of privation and struggle, with whatever additions and alterations the author's fancy dictated. In other respects also the story is more or less personal, for Dickens's marital experience was not unlike that of David, and Mr. Micawber is a close, if not very flattering, portrait of the author's father. For the rest the book is better knit in plot-structure than most of Dickens's novels, and contains, in addition to Micawber, a number of admirable character studies, notably the Peggottys and Miss Betsy Trotwood.

Following hard upon *David Copperfield* came three "purpose-novels": *Bleak House* (1852) exploited the "law's delays"; *Hard Times* (1854) is a study of the condition of the English laboring class; and *Little Dorrit* (1856) deals with the well remembered Marshalsea and at the same time, in the Circumlocution Office, satirizes the interminable processes of Government red tape.

Three other novels he was to write, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), in which he achieved a notably dramatic and coherent plot, *Great Expectations* (1861), and *Our Mutual Friend* (1865), besides a great many short stories and sketches for "Household Words" and its successor, "All the Year Round."

Meanwhile the author's expenses were largely increased through his purchase of Gadshill, an estate in Chatham which he had coveted ever since his boyhood days there; and through domestic difficulties which culminated in separation from his wife. Feeling that he must supplement the income from his novels, he turned thus late in life to a new vocation. Dickens had already on more than one occasion given private readings from his books to invited audiences; and not infrequently he had aided charitable enterprises by giving public readings; but in 1865 he began giving readings purely on his own account. Besides selections from his novels, he chose for these public occasions some of his most effective short stories, such as the *Christmas Carol* and *Boots at the Holly Tree Inn*. Enormous audiences heard him at all points with the utmost enthusiasm,* but his appreciation of the affection in which he was held and his zest in the work could not keep him from suffering from the strain of such strenuous labor. He was already showing symptoms of collapse, when, against the advice of his friends, he determined in 1867 to go to America.

Arrived in Boston, he met with a welcome of extraordinary warmth, and found no trace remaining of the misunderstandings and prejudices of his earlier visit. Great throngs attended his readings, and his six months' tour through the country was a continuous ovation. In spite of his failing health, the impression he made upon those who remembered his former visit was one of undiminished power. Of his

*Thus one of his letters describes his audience in Dublin: "You can hardly imagine it. All the way from the hotel to the Rotunda (a mile) I had to contend against the stream of people who were turned away. When I got there, they had broken the glass in the pay-boxes, and were offering five pounds freely for a stall. Half of my platform had to be taken down, and people heaped in among the ruins. You never saw such a scene." And in another letter about the same occasion: "Ladies stood all night with their chins against my platform. Other ladies sat all night upon my steps."

remarkable ability as a reader, George William Curtis wrote "Every character was individualized by the voice and by slight change of expression. But the reader stood perfect still, and the instant transition of the voice from the dramatic to the descriptive tone was unfailing and extraordinary. . . . Scrooge, and Tiny Tim, and Sam Weller and his wonderful father, and Sergeant Buzfuz, and Justice Starleigh have an intenser reality and vitality than ever before. As the reading advances, the spell becomes more entrancing. The mind and heart answer instantly to every tone and look of the reader. In a passionate outburst, as Bob Cratchit's wail for his lost boy or in Scrooge's prayer to be allowed to repent, the whole scene lives and throbbed before you. And when, in the great trial of *Barde* against *Pickwick*, the thick fat voice of the elder Well wheezes from the gallery, 'Put it down with a wee, my Lord, put it down with a wee,' you turn to look for the gallery and behold the benevolent parent."

In 1868 Dickens returned to England, shattered in health but indomitable still. Very imprudently he consented to give another series of readings, and undertook a new novel, *Edwin Drood*. For two years he kept up the unequal struggle, active always in spite of great bodily weakness. On the eighth of June, 1870, after a day of unremitting labor upon his never-to-be-finished book, he was stricken down, and died on the following day.

It had been a life-long conviction with the novelist that funeral services should always be as free as possible from ceremonial and publicity. For himself, he desired a simple and obscure burial, and, in fact, had left explicit instructions in his will that no public announcement of the time and place of his funeral should be made and that no monument be erected to his memory. But the demand that his remain

should be interred in Westminster was so universal that his family yielded. With simple ceremonies he was laid to rest in the Abbey, with a stone bearing only his name to mark his resting place.

The personality of the man who had thus risen from obscurity to a place among the great men of England has already been hinted at in the account of his life. The tenderness, the sympathy, the love of children, the simple-hearted domestic virtues whose portrayal constitutes one of the most enduring charms of his novels, he possessed in his own person to an unusual degree. His devotion to his children found expression in the enthusiasm with which he entered into their pleasures, played with them, danced with them, celebrated festivals with them, out-boyed the most boyish of them. He had that rare quality with which a few men of rich fancy have been endowed of never altogether growing up. Many letters from youthful readers of his books all over the world he answered as literally as one child would write to another.

And this youthful enthusiasm of child's play was with him in everything that he did. He was restless, intense, eager. He needed movement and excitement. He worked all day and rested himself by walking all night. He was intensely emotional, wept easily, became what he was describing, and wrote in a kind of frenzy. His daughter records that "when he was arranging and rehearsing his readings for *Dombey*, the death of Little Paul caused him such real anguish that . . . he could only master his intense emotion by keeping the picture of Plorn (the author's youngest boy) well, strong, and hearty, steadily before his eyes." The death of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* was a personal bereavement to him, from which he did not recover for a long time. When he was writing *A Christmas Carol*, he "laughed

and wept again, and excited himself in a most extraordinary manner in the composition; and thinking whereof he walked about the black streets of London, fifteen and twenty miles many a night when all the sober folks had gone to bed." And when it was done he "broke out like a mad man."

His business and social relations were carried out in the same spirit of intensity and wholeheartedness. Always working to the limit of his endurance, he was always undertaking some new enterprise which surpassed that limit and had to be given up. It was so with his schemes for periodicals, for books, for readings, for theatricals. Whenever he saw a case of destitution, he sought to relieve it; whenever he saw an abuse, he sought to reform it. He may not always have been wise or successful; but in social reforms alone, he accomplished, in the words of Daniel Webster, "more to ameliorate the condition of the English poor than all the statesmen Great Britain had sent into Parliament." In at least three reforms vital to the Nation, he was one of the most potent factors—in the improvement of the common schools, in the alleviation of the laws respecting the imprisonment of debtors, and in the abolishment of public executions. In addition, he was the moving spirit in innumerable benevolent aims and started funds and founded societies of great private and public benefit.

It is no wonder that such a man should have had friends. The choicest spirits in London gathered round him in the little dinners with which he celebrated the completion of each novel, and in Europe and America the range of his actual acquaintanceship was enormous. But larger still—well nigh incalculable—was the number of those who, never having seen him, yet felt a sense of intimacy with him born of their intimacy with and love for the children of his brain. The news of his death made two continents sad.

What has been said of his personality furnishes in a way the key to his art as a novelist. Dickens was at heart an actor, whose histrionic power was supplemented by close observation and a ready pen. His daughter, Mamie, in *My Father As I Recall Him*, tells of an occasion when she was ill and was carried into her father's study during his working hours. "I was lying on the sofa endeavouring to keep perfectly quiet, while my father wrote busily and rapidly at his desk, when he suddenly jumped from his chair and rushed to a mirror which hung near, and in which I could see the reflection of some extraordinary facial contortions which he was making. He returned rapidly to his desk, wrote furiously for a few moments, and then went again to the mirror. The facial pantomime was resumed, and then turning toward, but evidently not seeing me, he began talking rapidly in a low voice. Ceasing this soon, however, he returned once more to his desk, where he remained silently writing until luncheon time. It was a most curious experience for me, and one of which I did not, until later years, fully appreciate the purport. Then I knew that with his natural intensity, he had thrown himself completely into the character that he was creating, and that for the time being, he had not only lost sight of his surroundings, but had actually become in action, as in imagination, the creature of his pen."

The case is typical; for though Dickens may not always have responded physically to the impulse of his imagination as he did on this occasion, he was always acting the parts which he created. He always saw them staged. This is at once a gain and a loss to his readers, for while it accounts for the extraordinary verve and vividness of detail of his pictures of life, it accounts at the same time for the exaggeration of line, the overstress, which afford the most obvious

ground for criticising him. The actor does not modulate his voice and gestures to the ears and eyes of his companions on the stage. He heightens them and exaggerates them as he heightens the color of his face, so that his "effects" may define themselves with especial vividness to his audience. We weep over the death of Little Nell, not because we ever heard of a child's dying like that, or believe that a child could die like that, but rather because our hearts are wrung with an accumulation of all the pathos that could possibly be concentrated into one death-scene—and we never forget it. We have never heard of anybody with half the smooth hypocrisy of Mr. Pecksniff, nor half the fawning humility of Uriah Heep, nor half the unshakable cheerfulness of Mark Tapley; and for that very reason we remember them and make companions of them and estimate our acquaintances in terms of them.

This is not to say, however, that Dickens wholly misrepresents his world. It is not that his characters are untrue, but simply that they are a little more than true. It is worth repeating that he was a close and accurate observer with a marvellously retentive memory. He spent a large part of his life studying the "everyday people", and in most cases he simply recorded what he had seen—with the "retouching" (to change the figure) which a photographer gives to a picture to heighten its effect. The result is that Dickens's name is associated—not with plots, for as might have been expected he was seldom very successful in holding them together—but with types, character-studies—and he has given us the most comprehensive gallery of these that artist ever drew—

Filling from time to time his humorous stage
With all the Persons down to palsied Age
That Life brings with her in her equipage.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

A Christmas Carol is at once a tract and a literary masterpiece. As a tract it has, in the phrase of Lord Jeffrey, "fostered more kindly feelings and prompted more positive acts of beneficence" than all the formal Christmas sermons ever preached. One likes to think of it in this way—as an appeal on the part of the high-spirited, generous-hearted, Christmas-loving Dickens to his friends everywhere to remember that wealth does not make Christmas happy, and that poverty and isolation need not make it miserable; an appeal to them to make Christmas what the Cratchits made it, a time of good will to everybody—even to the Scrooges. One likes to think, too, of the joy the answers to that appeal brought to Dickens; of the letters that "poured upon its author daily, all through that Christmas time—of which the general burden was to tell him, amid many confidences about their homes, how the *Carol* had come to be read aloud there, and was to be kept upon a little shelf by itself, and was to do them no end of good." One likes to read the story with the picture in one's mind of the author's merry Christmasing with his children—"Such dinings, such conjurings, such blindman's buffings, such kissings out of old years and kissings in of new ones." But to content oneself with the mere sentiment of the thing is to miss half the pleasure of *A Christmas Carol*. It is a delight also to see how skillfully Dickens has managed his artistic problem.

It is no slight task to tell a story which nobody can possibly believe, and yet to make everybody believe it; but it would be a very skeptical person indeed who would doubt that Scrooge saw Marley's ghost, any more than he would doubt that Marley was really dead. How does Dickens make it all so "natural"?

Well, in the first place he makes the actual living persons

very real to us. Scrooge in his counting-house with his shriveled cheeks and his thin blue lips and his blunt hard ways; jolly Bob Cratchit and his rollicking family; the careless, cynical gossipers on 'Change,—all these belong to a very real world of everyday commonplace people. We meet them on the street any day. Some of them Dickens merely "sketches in", but Scrooge is first described by the author and then put in a position to give us a taste of his own quality, in his encounters with the merry nephew and the amiable collectors and the shivering clerk and the hungry street-singer. We know just what to expect of Scrooge by the time he has had an interview or two.

Into this world of the commonplace Dickens brings a ghost—but not too suddenly. When we are satisfied that Marley is really dead, we are casually reminded of what happened to Hamlet's father. Then we begin to feel that the night and the fog are a bit uncanny; then Marley's dead face looks out of the knocker. But the sturdy Scrooge is not shaken, so neither are we—that is, not exactly! Then the notion of a hearse; and then the forbidding darkness of those rooms; and the swinging bells, and the clanking chain—and Marley! Even yet we might be disposed to doubt, if Dickens had done as a less skillful artist would have done. that is, fallen to ranting and indulged in high-flown "ghost-talk". Instead, Scrooge is just what we have learned to expect—shrewd, skeptical, blunt, hard-headed. His remarks to the ghost are just as commonplace as he is. Scrooge is not to be brought over if he can help it. He tries to divert the ghost with a toothpick; and even when Scrooge is brought to his knees, he puts his hands in his breeches pockets. In other words, Dickens makes us swallow the unreal in his ghost story by washing it down with an infinite number of little commonplace realities.

There are other points worth noticing too—the skill with which the rich Scrooge's meanness at the festive season is contrasted with the scenes of poverty lightened with Christmas cheer; the art with which we are made to apprehend the whole life-history of Scrooge by those few scenes in the vision of the Christmas Past; the way the author has laid aside his more lightsome humor to portray that grim and awful death scene; the tender and pathetic picture of Tiny Tim, with touches in it here and there which we have to grow up to understand; and finally, the stages in old Scrooge's reformation, with that page or two at the close where every line seems to vibrate with the sheer excitement of his Christmas joy.

These are a few of the things worth studying in the *Carol*; but after all the best thing about it is the abounding human love which breathes through its pages—the quality which evoked from Thackeray these high words of praise—"It is the work of the master of all the English humourists now alive; the young man who came and took his place calmly at the head of the whole tribe, and who has kept it Who can listen to objections regarding such a book as this? It seems to me a national benefit, and to every man or woman who reads it a personal kindness. The last two people I heard speak of it were women; neither knew the other, or the author, and both said, by way of criticism "God bless him!" As for Tiny Tim there is not a reader in England but that little creature will be a bond of union between the author and him; and he will say of Charles Dickens, as the woman just now, 'God bless him!' What a feeling is this for a writer to be able to inspire and what a reward to reap!"

THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH

The Cricket on the Hearth (1846) originated in a long cherished idea of the author's to establish a weekly periodical to be called "The Cricket," with the motto: "A cheerful creature that chirrup on the hearth," The plan for the periodical, temporarily abandoned, was later carried out in "Household Words," and *The Cricket* became the germ of the third Christmas story. "It would be a delicate and beautiful fancy for a Christmas book," Dickens wrote "making the Cricket a little household God—silent in the wrong and sorrow of the tale, and loud again when all went well and happily." Admirably successful in carrying out this plan, Dickens never lets us forget the presence and interest of the Spirit of the Hearth. The merry duet of cricket and kettle at the beginning, rising gradually out of prose into a most rapturous rhythm, fades into silence as sorrow and misunderstanding come upon the Peerybingles. But when matters are at their worst, and the pleasant little story trembles on the verge of tragedy, the cricket's chirp saves John from wrong-doing and recalls his manhood. Cheerful and helpful, the cricket on occasion can be tender too, chirping "in a low, faint, sorrowing way," audible only to the blind girl's ear.

The story which grows up around this guardian spirit has also some claims to our attention. It is a simple plot, in which two threads are successfully interwoven. The minor characters, Tilly Slowboy, the Plummers, Tackleton, and the Fieldings all contribute to the working out of the central theme. The complicating element, in the person of the Unknown,* is cleverly managed; the suspense is skillfully

*The student should note the part played by the Unknown in binding the two parts together.

developed, through the insinuations of Tackleton, the "baby-talk" of Tilly, and the embarrassment of Dot; and the denouement is unquestionably dramatic. In its dramatized form, the role of Caleb Plummer was a favorite one with the great actor, Joseph Jefferson.*

Two possible defects in the story the student would do well to consider—first, whether the reasons for Dot's keeping the secret from John are sufficient to warrant her in imperiling her life-happiness; and second, whether the "conversion" of Tackleton at the close, pleasantly as it fits in with the general scheme, is in any way warranted by our knowledge of his character.

THE WRECK OF THE GOLDEN MARY

It should be observed that the impression of reality gained from this vivid narrative is due to the extreme simplicity with which the story is told. The language is blunt and straightforward as befits a seaman. The incident is tragic, but the captain does not indulge in any heroics. He is scrupulous to give only the facts, and he reinforces the story with the most minute details—such as the "bag of coffee, roasted but not ground (thrown in . . . by mistake for something else)," and the reference to the care with which Mrs. Atherfield had bound up her hair just before the evening hymn every day, until Lucy died. It is thus that Defoe in *Robinson Crusoe* puts the stamp of truth upon adventures which are pure fiction.

A remarkable piece of description is that in which the

* "It seems strange that Dickens's plots, though interesting, and his dialogue and characters apparently dramatic, should be unsatisfactory when arranged for the stage. The story of *The Cricket on the Hearth* is the one exception, for with trifling condensation it can be acted with effect from the book itself, having all the completeness and direct motives that go to make a play."—JOSEPH JEFFERSON, *The Cricket on the Hearth*, introduction, p. 9.

captain tells what he saw in the moment when the blue-light first illuminated the shipwreck.

THE STORY OF RICHARD DOUBLEDICK

The student should note the adroitness with which the author has varied the successive steps of Richard Doubledick's promotion, and the way his ranks are introduced; the skill with which the dialogue is handled, and the ingenuity of the plot. The story falls naturally into three divisions—the reformation of Richard Doubledick, his career as a soldier, and his finding the French officer. Each of these, retold from memory, would make excellent material for a narrative theme. Depending for his interest upon plot, Dickens makes no special effort at characterization; but the student may profitably ask himself whether he does not get a clearer idea of Captain Taunton's character from the one scene in the barracks, than he does of Richard Doubledick's from the entire story.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Questions.

How many and what groups of characters do you find in this story? What binds the groups together? Which group seems to have most effect on Scrooge? Which seems to you most vivid? How is the atmosphere of mystery developed early in the story? Note the different things which prepare us for the coming of Marley's ghost. How does Dickens use the word *ghost* in this story?

As you read, make a list of vivid similes and descriptive phrases; e. g. "In walked Mrs. Fezziwig one vast substantial smile." . . . "but the clerk's fire was so much smaller that it looked like one coal."

How is the gradual transformation of Scrooge effected?

What is the central thought or purpose of the story?

Theme Subjects.

1. Description of the three Christmas Spirits.
2. Bob Cratchit's Dinner.
3. Tiny Tim.
4. The Shops as you know them at Christmas time.
5. Christmas Frolics in your own Home.
6. How the Christmas Spirits transformed Scrooge.

THE WRECK OF THE GOLDEN MARY

Questions.

Compare the introduction in this story with that in each of the others.

Is the manner of the narrative in character with the person of the narrator?

Is the description of the storm effective? What words or phrases contribute to the vividness?

What picturesque contrasts do you find among the people on shipboard? Do you find in any characters in the other stories qualities such as those shown by the Captain? by John Steadiman? by Lucy? How do you interpret Mr. Rarx's repeated references to the gold? Had he been in California before? What do you think his purpose was in making his voyage on the *Golden Mary*?

Do you think the shipwrecked people were saved? By what means? Did they reach California? What events of importance took place there? How did they return to England?

Theme Subjects.

Write a brief story of a hunt for treasure. (Read Stevenson's "Treasure Island," Irving's "The Money-Diggers" in "Tales of a Traveller," and Poe's "The Gold Bug.")

RICHARD DOUBLEDICK.

Questions.

How does the author give the setting for this story? Is it given more promptly and directly than in *A Christmas Carol*? Can you suggest a reason for this?

Is the account of Doubledick's early life given before or after the story actually begins? Do you consider this arrangement artistic? Compare this with the Introduction in *A Christmas Carol*.

Tell the story briefly selecting only the parts which are indispensable to the plot. What is the main thread of the narrative (the Main Action)? What is the beginning of the action (the Exciting Force)? What is the turning point (the Climax)? The end (the Solution)?

Trace the steps in the rise of Richard Doubledick from Private to Captain. Is each step prepared for, or justified by facts given in the story? Does rise in rank mark a corresponding development in character, or is Doubledick's regeneration completed in the first interview with Captain Taunton?

How is the motive of Doubledick's revenge kept before the reader? Refer to the exact instances. Is this motive ever lost sight of? Would the outcome have been different had the circumstances of the meeting of Doubledick and the French officer been different? Is there any preparation for the peaceful outcome of the meeting?

Is there any event in the story for which you think there is insufficient preparation?

How do you explain the effect which Captain Taunton has on Doubledick? Compare it with the effect of the Christmas Spirits on Scrooge.

Has the story a moral purpose? If so, what is it?

Theme Subjects.

How Captain Taunton changed the character of Richard Doubledick.

The Charge at Badajos.

In Brussels after Waterloo.

Captain Doubledick at the Old Chateau.

THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH.

Questions.

What is the time, place, and social background of this story? Is it given directly and promptly, or by inference and with deliberation?

How is the reader led into the narrative? Are there any preliminary scenes which give us impressions of characters? Is this method artistic?

Tell the story briefly selecting only the points which are indispensable to the plot. What is the Main Action? The Exciting Force? The Climax? The Solution? Are there any subordinate actions?

Who are the principal characters? The subordinate characters? Upon what principle do you make this division? How is each connected with the main action? What characters are most vividly portrayed?

Who is the heroine of *The Cricket on the Hearth*? How

the other stories heroines? Who is the hero? On what principle do you make this selection?

Is there any preparation for the return of Edward Plummer? For the change in Tackleton?

Note the rhythm and rhyme of the Kettle's and Cricket's song, and the way in which they sympathize with the other personages of the story.

This story was dramatized and presented on the stage for many years by Joseph Jefferson, an American actor. Which scenes should you think best adapted for dramatic presentation? Why?

Theme Subjects.

The Toy Shop.

Caleb and Bertha.

The Peerybingle Household.

Mrs. Peerybingle's Kitchen.

A Modern Kitchen.

Tilly Slowboy.

The Change in the Character of Tackleton.

The Regeneration of Scrooge, Richard Doubledick, and Tackleton.

Tiny Tim and Golden Lucy.

The personality of Dickens as revealed in these Stories.

General Questions.

Contrast the methods of beginning the stories. In which does the plot open promptly? In which does the author give elaborate prologues? In which do you first become interested in the plot? in the characters? Can you justify each method in the instance in which it is used?

In which of these four stories is the plot element most prominent? Which characters interest you most? Which scenes?

Is the ending of the stories happy in every instance? Does a shadow rest on any character?

Are there any points of similarity in the portrayal of Tiny Tim and of Lucy?

Do you find instances in which one characteristic or one descriptive phrase is always applied to a character?

Do any characters seem exaggerated?

Criticize the titles.

The following characteristics of Dickens have been pointed out by critics.* Can you illustrate each by extracts from these stories?

1. Fondness for Caricature—Exaggeration—Grotesqueness.

2. Genial Humor.

3. Incarnation of Characteristics—Single Strokes.

4. Descriptive Power—Minuteness of Observation—Vividness.

5. Tender, sometimes Mawkish, Pathos.

6. Gayety—Animal Spirits—Good-Fellowship.

7. Sincerity—Manliness—Earnestness.

8. Broad Sympathy—Plain, Practical Humanity

9. Dramatic Power.

10. Vulgarity—Artificiality.

11. Diffuseness.

*Quoted by Bliss Perry in "A Study of Prose Fiction."

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

STAVE ONE

MARLEY'S GHOST

MARLEY was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt
ever about that. The register of his burial is held
by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it: and, once, was
was good upon 'Change, for anything his hand is hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail, on
nd! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own
ledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail.

I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a
-nail as the deadeast piece of ironmongery in the
But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile;
ny unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the
try's done for. You will therefore permit me to
t, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as a door-

15
ooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How
it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners
don't know how many years. Scrooge was his
xecutor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his
residuary legatee, his sole friend and sole mourner. 20
even Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the
vent, but that he was an excellent man of business
e very day of the funeral, and solemnised it with an
ubted bargain.

25
e mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the
I started from. There is no doubt that Marley

was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate. If we were not perfectly convinced that Hamlet's Father died before the play began, there would be nothing more remarkable in his taking a stroll at night, in an easterly wind, upon his own ramparts, than there would be in any other middle-aged gentleman rashly turning out after dark in a breezy spot—say Saint Paul's Churchyard for instance—literally to astonish his son's weak mind.

~~Scrooge~~ Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door the name and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he was equal to both names: it was all the same to him.

But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, nor wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, ^{id} "gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? W ^{hen} will you come to see me?" No beggars implored him ^{st-10} to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock. No man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the ⁵ way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!" ¹⁰

But what did Scrooge care? It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call "nuts" to Scrooge.

Once upon a time—of all the good days in the year, on ¹⁵ Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the court outside go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement-stones to warm ²⁰ them. The City clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already: it had not been light all day; and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and ²⁵ was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale. ³⁰

/ The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller *that it looked like one coal.* But he couldn't ³⁵ *replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room;*

was so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the waster predicted that it would be necessary for them to If, rt. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

"A Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

10 "Bah!" said Scrooge, "Humbug!"

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled and his breath smoked again.

15 "Christmas a humbug, uncle!" said Scrooge's nephew. "You don't mean that, I am sure."

"I do," said Scrooge. "Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough."

20 "Come, then," returned the nephew, gayly. "What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough."

Scrooge having no better answer ready on the spot of the moment, said, "Bah!" again; and followed it up with, "Humbug."

25 "Don't be cross, uncle," said the nephew.)

"What else can I be," returned the uncle, "when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em go through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will," said Scrooge, indignantly, "every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and

with a stake of holly through his heart. He should ^{who}

"Uncle!" (pleaded the nephew.)

"Nephew!" (returned the uncle, sternly,) "keep Christmas ^{then} in your own way, and let me keep it in mine."

"Keep it!" (repeated Scrooge's nephew.) "But you ⁵ don't keep it."

"Let me leave it alone, then," (said Scrooge.) "Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!"

"There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say," ¹⁰ (returned the nephew.) "Christmas among the rest. But

I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that—as a good time: a kind, forgiving, ¹⁵ charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures ²⁰ bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it *has* done me good, and *will* do me good; and I say, God bless it!"

The clerk in the Tank involuntarily applauded: ²⁵ becoming immediately sensible of the impropriety, he poked the fire, and extinguished the last frail spark forever.)

"Let me hear another sound from *you*," (said Scrooge, "and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation."

"You're quite a powerful speaker, Sir," (he added, turning ³⁰ to his nephew.) "I wonder you don't go into Parliament."

"Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us to-morrow."

Scrooge said that he would see him—yes, indeed he did. He went the whole length of the expression, and ³⁵ said that he would see him in that extremity first.)

"But why?" (cried Scrooge's nephew. "Why?"

"Why did you get married?" (said Scrooge.)

"Because I fell in love."

"Because you fell in love!" (growled Scrooge, as if that
5 were the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than
a merry Christmas.) "Good afternoon!"

"Nay, uncle, but you never came to see me before that
happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?"

"Good afternoon," (said Scrooge.)

10 "I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why
cannot we be friends?"

"Good afternoon," (said Scrooge.)

"I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute.
We have never had any quarrel, to which I have been a
15 party. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas,
and I'll keep my Christmas humour to the last. So A
Merry Christmas, uncle!"

"Good afternoon!" (said Scrooge.)

"And A Happy New Year!"

20 "Good afternoon!" (said Scrooge.)

His nephew left the room without an angry word, not-
withstanding. He stopped at the outer door to bestow
the greetings of the season on the clerk, who, cold as he
was, was warmer than Scrooge; for he returned them
25 cordially.

"There's another fellow," muttered Scrooge; who over-
heard him: "my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and
a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'll
retire to Bedlam."

30 This lunatic, in letting Scrooge's nephew out, had let
two other people in. They were portly gentlemen, pleasant
to behold, and now stood, with their hats off, in Scrooge's
office. They had books and papers in their hands, and
bowed to him.

"Scrooge and Marley's, I believe," said one of the

gentlemen, referring to his list. "Have I the pleasure of dressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?"

"Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years," Scrooge replied. "He died seven years ago, this very night."

"We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner," said the gentleman, presenting his credentials.

It certainly was; for they had been two kindred spirits. At the ominous word "liberality," Scrooge frowned, and shook his head, and handed the credentials back.

"At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge," said the gentleman, taking up a pen, "it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, Sir."

"Are there no prisons?" asked Scrooge.

"Plenty of prisons," said the gentleman, laying down the pen again.

"And the Union workhouses?" demanded Scrooge. "Are they still in operation?"

"They are. Still," returned the gentleman, "I wish I could say they were not."

"The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?" said Scrooge.

"Both very busy, Sir."

"Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course," said Scrooge. "I'm very glad to hear it."

"Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude," returned the gentleman, "a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a

time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?"

"Nothing," Scrooge replied.

"You wish to be anonymous?"

- 5 "I wish to be left alone," said Scrooge. "Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned: they cost enough: and those
10 who are badly off must go there."

"Many can't go there; and many would rather die."

"If they would rather die," said Scrooge, "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides—
—excuse me—I don't know that."

- 15 "But you might know it," observed the gentleman.

"It's not my business," Scrooge returned. "It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!"

- 20 Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge resumed his labours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than was usual with him.

- Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened so, that
25 people ran about with flaring links, proffering their services to go before horses in carriages, and conduct them on their way. The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping slyly down at Scrooge out of a gothic window in the wall, became invisible, and
30 struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there. The cold became intense. In the main street at the corner of the court, some labourers were repairing the gas-pipes, and had lighted a great fire in a brazier, round which a party of ragged men and
■ boys were gathered: warming their hands and winking

their eyes before the blaze in rapture. The water-plug being left in solitude, its overflowings sullenly congealed, and turned to misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lamp heat of the windows, made pale faces ruddy as they passed. 5
Poulterers' and grocers' trades became a splendid joke: a glorious pageant, with which it was next to impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do. The Lord Mayor, in the stronghold of the mighty Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty 10
cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor's household should; and even the little tailor, whom he had fined five shillings on the previous Monday for being drunk and bloodthirsty in the streets, stirred up to-morrow's pudding in his garret, while his lean wife and the 15
baby sallied out to buy the beef.

Foggier yet, and colder! Piercing, searching, biting, cold. If the good Saint Dunstan had but nipped the Evil Spirit's nose with a touch of such weather as that, instead of using his familiar weapons, then indeed he 20
would have roared to lusty purpose. The owner of one scant young nose, gnawed and mumbled by the hungry cold as bones are gnawed by dogs, stooped down at Scrooge's keyhole to regale him with a Christmas carol: but at the first sound of 25

"God bless you, merry gentleman!
May nothing you dismay!"

Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action, that the singer fled in terror, leaving the keyhole to the fog and even more congenial frost. 30

At length the hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived. With an ill-will Scrooge dismounted from his stool, and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk in the Tank, who instantly snuffed his candle out, and put on his hat.

"You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose?" said Scrooge.

"If quite convenient, Sir."

"It's not convenient," said Scrooge, "and it's not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you'd think yourself ill-used, I'll be bound?"

The clerk smiled faintly.

"And yet," said Scrooge, "you don't think *me* ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work."

The clerk observed that it was only once a year.

"A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!" said Scrooge, buttoning his great-coat to the chin. "But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning!"

The clerk promised that he would; and Scrooge walked out with a growl. The office was closed in a twinkling, and the clerk, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no great-coat), went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times, in honour of its being Christmas Eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt, to play at blindman's-buff.

Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's-book, went home to bed. He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of building up a yard, where it had so little business to be, that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hide-and-seek with other houses, and have forgotten the way out again. It was old enough now, and dreary enough, for nobody lived in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices. The yard
was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew its every stone, was fain to grope with his hands. The fog and frost so

ing about the black old gateway of the house, that it seemed as if the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold.

Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very 5ge. It is also a fact, that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place. // So that Scrooge had as little of what is called fancy about him as any man in the City of London, even including—
which is a bold word—the corporation, aldermen, and 10jury. Let it also be borne in mind that Scrooge had not entertained one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seven-years' dead partner that afternoon. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw 15the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change: not a knocker, but Marley's face.

Marley's face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as other objects in the yard were, but had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It was not 20friendly or ferocious, but looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look: with ghostly spectacles turned up on its ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hot air; and, though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless. That, and its livid colour, made 25it horrible; but its horror seemed to be in spite of the face, and beyond its control, rather than a part of its own expression.

As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was the knocker again. 30

To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy, would be untrue. But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily, 35locked in, and lighted his candle. *LOW*
He did pause, with a moment's irresolution, before he

... behind it first
... the sight of
... But there was
... the screws and
... P-wh, pooh!

... like thunder.
... wine-merchant's
... deal of echoes
... be frightened by
... across the hall
... his candle as he

... a coach-and-six
... a bad young Ad
... might have got a
... headwise, with the
... towards the
... There was plenty of
... is perhaps the
... a locomotive hearst
... Half-a-dozen gas
... lighted the entry
... was pretty dark with

... darkness
... he shut his
... see that all
... of the face

... All as they
... nobody under the
... and basin ready:
... had a cold in his
... nobody in
... which

44 Begemung.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

He took the about them when he reached the top

ing up in a suspicious attitude against the wall.
umber-room as usual. Old fire-guard, old shoes,
o fish-baskets, washing-stand on three legs, and a poker.
Quite satisfied, he closed his door, and locked himself
double-locked himself in, which was not his custom
us secured against surprise, he took off his cravat;
t on his dressing-gown and slippers, and his nightcap;
d sat down before the fire to take his gruel.

It was a very low fire indeed; nothing on such a bitter
ght. He was obliged to sit close to it, and brood
er it, before he could extract the least sensation of
rmth from such a handful of fuel. The fireplace was
old one, built by some Dutch merchant long ago, and
ved all round with quaint Dutch tiles, designed to
astrate the Scriptures. There were Cains and Abels,
araohs' daughters, Queens of Sheba, Angelic mes-
sengers descending through the air on clouds like feather-
ds, Abrahams, Belshazzars, Apostles putting off to sea
butter-boats, hundreds of figures, to attract his thoughts;
d yet that face of Marley, seven years dead, came like
e ancient Prophet's rod, and swallowed up the whole.
each smooth tile had been a blank at first, with power
shape some picture on its surface from the disjointed
gments of his thoughts, there would have been a copy
old Marley's head on every one.

"Humbug!" said Scrooge; and walked across the room.
After several turns, he sat down again. As he threw
s head back in the chair, his glance happened to rest
on a bell, a disused bell, that hung in the room, and
mmunicated for some purpose now forgotten with a
amber in the highest story of the building. It was
th great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable
ead, that as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing.

swung so softly in the outset that it scarcely made a
und; but soon it rang out loudly, and so did every bell
the house.

This might have lasted half a minute; or a minute, but it seemed an hour. The bells ceased ^{Suddenly} as they had begun, together. They were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below; as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the wine-merchant's cellar. Scrooge then remembered to have heard that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains.

The cellar-door flew open with a booming sound, and then he heard the noise much louder, on the floors below; then coming up the stairs; then coming straight towards his door.

"It's humbug still!" said Scrooge. "I won't believe it."

His colour changed though, when, without a pause, it came on through the heavy door, and passed into the room before his eyes. Upon its coming in, the dying flame leaped up, as though it cried "I know him! Marley's Ghost!" and fell again. //

The same face: the very same. Marley in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel. His body was transparent; so that Scrooge, observing him, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind.

Scrooge had often heard it said that Marley had no bowels, but he had never believed it until now.

No, nor did he believe it even now. Though he looked the phantom through and through, and saw it standing before him; though he felt the chilling influence of its death-cold eyes; and marked the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin, which

wrapper he had not observed before: he was still incredulous, and fought against his senses.

"~~How~~ ^{Now} now!" said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever.

"What do you want with me?"

"Much!"—Marley's voice, no doubt about it.

"Who are you?"

"Ask me who I was."

"Who were you then?" said Scrooge, raising his voice.

"You're particular—for a shade." He was going to say

"to a shade," but substituted this, as more appropriate.

"In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley."

"Can you—can you sit down?" asked Scrooge, looking doubtfully at him.

"I can."

"Do it then."

Scrooge asked the question, because he didn't know whether a ghost so transparent might find himself in a condition to take a chair; and felt that in the event of its being impossible, it might involve the necessity of an embarrassing explanation. But the Ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were quite used to it.

"You don't believe in me," observed the Ghost.

"I don't," said Scrooge.

"What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?"

"I don't know," said Scrooge.

"Why do you doubt your senses?"

"Because," said Scrooge, "a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!"

Scrooge was not much in the habit of cracking jokes, nor did he feel, in his heart, by any means waggish the

The truth is, that he tried to be smart, as a means of distracting his own attention, and keeping down his terror; for the spectre's voice disturbed the very marrow in his bones.

- 5 To sit, staring at those fixed, glazed eyes, in silence for a moment, would play, Scrooge felt, the very deuce with him. There was something very awful, too, in the spectre's being provided with an infernal atmosphere of its own. Scrooge could not feel it himself, but this was clearly the
10 case; for though the Ghost sat perfectly motionless, its hair, and skirts, and tassels, were still agitated as by the hot vapour from an oven.

- ✓ “You see this toothpick?” said Scrooge, returning quickly to the charge, for the reason just assigned; and
15 wishing, though it were only for a second, to divert the vision's stony gaze from himself.

“I do,” replied the Ghost.

“You are not looking at it,” said Scrooge.

“But I see it,” said the Ghost, “notwithstanding.”

- 20 “Well!” returned Scrooge. “I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you—humbug!”

- /// At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook its
25 chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that Scrooge held on tight to his chair to save himself from falling in a swoon. But how much greater was his horror, when the phantom taking off the bandage round its head, as if it were too warm to wear indoors, its lower jaw dropped
30 down upon its breast!

Scrooge fell upon his knees, and clasped his hands before his face.

“Mercy!” he said. “Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?”

- 35 “*Man of the worldly mind!*” replied the Ghost, “do you believe in me or not?”

do," said Scrooge. "I must. But why do spirits
the earth, and why do they come to me?"

It is required of every man," the Ghost returned,
that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his
w-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit 5
not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death.

doomed to wander through the world—oh, woe is
—and witness what it cannot share, but might have
ed on earth, and turned to happiness!"

Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook its chain, and 10
ing its shadowy hands.

"You are fettered," said Scrooge, trembling. "Tell
why?"

"I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost.
made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on 15
my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it.
Is its pattern strange to you?"

Scrooge trembled more and more.

"Or would you know," pursued the Ghost, "the weight
length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was 20
as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves

You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous
chain!"

Scrooge glanced about him on the floor, in the expect-
ation of finding himself surrounded by some fifty or sixty 25
coils of iron cable: but he could see nothing.

"Jacob," he said imploringly. "Old Jacob Marley,
help me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob."

"I have none to give," the Ghost replied. "It comes
from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed 30
to other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I
tell you what I would. A very little more, is all per-
mitted to me. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot
rove anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our
living-house—mark me!—in life my spirit never roved 35

beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing
and weary journeys lie before me!" //

It was a habit with Scrooge, whenever he became
thoughtful, to put his hands in his breeches pockets.
5 Pondering on what the Ghost had said, he did so
but without lifting up his eyes, or getting off his knees.

"You must have been very slow about it, Jacob
Scrooge observed, in a business-like manner, though
humility and deference.

10 "Slow!" the Ghost repeated.

"Seven years dead," mused Scrooge. "And travel
all the time!"

"The whole time," said the Ghost. "No rest, no
incessant torture of remorse."

15 "You travel fast?" said Scrooge.

"On the wings of the wind," replied the Ghost.

"You might have got over a great quantity of ground
seven years," said Scrooge.

The Ghost, on hearing this, set up another cry,
20 clanked its chain so hideously in the dead silence of
night, that the Ward would have been justified in indicting
it for a nuisance.

"Oh! captive, bound, and double-ironed," cried
phantom, "not to know, that ages of incessant labour
25 by immortal creatures, for this earth must pass
eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is
developed. Not to know that any Christian spirit works
kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will
its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness.
30 Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for
one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I!
such was I!"

✎ "But you were always a good man of business, Jacob
faltered Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself.

35 "Business!" cried the Ghost, wringing its hands together.
"Mankind was my business. The common welfare

business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business!" The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!"

He held up its chain at arm's length, as if that were the cause of all its unavailing grief, and flung it heavily upon the ground again.

At this time of the rolling year," the spectre said, "suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-workers with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode! Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me!"

Scrooge was very much dismayed to hear the spectre go on at this rate, and began to quake exceedingly. "Hear me!" cried the Ghost. "My time is nearly gone."

"I will," said Scrooge. "But don't be hard upon me! I'm not flowery, Jacob! Pray!"

How it is that I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day."

This was not an agreeable idea. Scrooge shivered, and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"That is no light part of my penance," pursued the spectre. "I am here to-night to warn you, that you have a chance and hope of escaping my fate. ~~A chance~~ ~~hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.~~"

"You were always a good friend to me," said Scrooge. "Thank'ee!"

"You will be haunted," resumed the Ghost, "by Three Spirits."

Scrooge's countenance fell almost as low as the Ghost's when he said this.

"Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?" asked Scrooge, in a faltering voice.

"It is."

"I—I think I'd rather not," said Scrooge.

"Without their visits," said the Ghost, "you c
hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first to-m
5 when the bell tolls one."

"'Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it
Jacob?" hinted Scrooge.

"Expect the second on the next night at the same
The third upon the next night when the last str
10 twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no
and look that, for your own sake, you remember wh
passed between us!"

When it had said these words, the spectre t
wrapper from the table, and bound it round its h
15 before. Scrooge knew this, by the smart sound it
made, when the jaws were brought together by the
age. He ventured to raise his eyes again, and fou
supernatural visitor confronting him in an erect at
with its chain wound over and about its arm.

20 The apparition walked backward from him;
every step it took, the window raised itself a little,
when the spectre reached it, it was wide open. It
oned Scrooge to approach, which he did. When the
within two paces of each other, Marley's Ghost h
25 its hand, warning him to come no nearer. S
stopped.

Not so much in obedience, as in surprise and
for on the raising of the hand, he became sens
confused noises in the air; incoherent sounds of
30 tation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowfu
self-accusatory. The spectre, after listening for a m
joined in the mournful dirge; and floated out up
bleak, dark night.

Scrooge followed to the window: desperate
35 curiosity. He looked out.

The air was filled with phantoms, wandering his

in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost; some few might be guilty governments) were linked together; some were free. Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He had been quite familiar with the Ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron chain attached to its ankle, who cried piteously at being asked to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom he found below, upon a door-step. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in other people's matters, and had lost the power forever. Whether these creatures faded into mist, or mist ended them, he could not tell. But they and their voices faded together; and the night became as it had been, when he walked home.

Scrooge closed the window, and examined the door by which the Ghost had entered. It was double-locked, and he had locked it with his own hands, and the bolts were undisturbed. He tried to say "Humbug!" but he stopped at the first syllable. And being, from the emotion he had undergone, or the fatigues of the day, or his glimpse of the Invisible World, or the dull conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the hour, much in need of repose, he went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep at the instant. //

STAVE TWO

THE FIRST OF THE THREE SPIRITS

When Scrooge awoke, it was so dark, that looking of bed, he could scarcely distinguish the transparent window from the opaque walls of his chamber. He endeavoured to pierce the darkness with his ferret eyes, when the chimes of a neighbouring church struck the quarters. So he listened for the hour.

To his great astonishment the heavy bell went on from six to seven, and from seven to eight, and regularly up to twelve; then stopped. Twelve! It was past two when he went to bed. The clock was wrong. An icicle must have got into the works. Twelve!

He touched the spring of his repeater, to correct most preposterous clock. Its rapid little pulse beat twice and stopped.

15 "Why, it isn't possible," said Scrooge, "that I can have slept through a whole day and far into another night. It isn't possible that anything has happened to the clock, and this is twelve at noon!"

The idea being an alarming one, he scrambled out of bed, and groped his way to the window. He was obliged to rub the frost off with the sleeve of his dressing-gown before he could see anything; and could see very little then. All he could make out was, that it was still so foggy and extremely cold, and that there was no sign of people running to and fro, and making a great stir there unquestionably would have been if night had been off bright day, and taken possession of the world. 'Twas a great relief, because "three days after sight of Bank of England Exchange pay to Mr. Ebenezer Scrooge or

r," and so forth, would have become a mere United
 s' security if there were no days to count by.
 rooge went to bed again, and thought, and thought,
 thought it over and over and over, and could make
 ng of it. The more he thought, the more perplexed 5
 as; and the more he endeavoured not to think, the
 he thought. Marley's Ghost bothered him exceed-
 . Every time he resolved within himself, after
 re inquiry, that it was all a dream, his mind flew
 again, like a strong spring released, to its first posi- 10
 and presented the same problem to be worked all
 glf, "Was it a dream or not?"
 rooge lay in this state until the chimes had gone three
 ers more, when he remembered, on a sudden, that
 Ghost had warned him of a visitation when the bell 15
 l one. He resolved to lie awake until the hour
 passed; and, considering that he could no more go
 ep than go to Heaven, this was perhaps the wisest
 ation in his power.
 e quarter was so long, that he was more than once 20
 nced he must have sunk into a doze unconsciously,
 missed the clock. At length it broke upon his
 ing ear.
 'ing, dong!"
 quarter past," said Scrooge, counting. 25
 'ing, dong!"
 alf-past!" said Scrooge.
 'ing, dong!"
 quarter to it," said Scrooge.
 'ing, dong!" 30
 'he hour itself," said Scrooge, triumphantly, "and
 ng else!"
 spoke before the hour bell sounded, which it now
 with a deep, dull, hollow, melancholy ONE. Light
 d up in the room upon the instant, and the curtains 35
 bed were drawn.

The curtains of his bed were drawn aside, I tell you, by a hand. Not the curtains at his feet, nor the curtains at his back, but those to which his face was addressed. The curtains of his bed were drawn aside; and Scrooge, starting up into a half-recumbent attitude, found himself face to face with the unearthly visitor who drew them as close to it as I am now to you, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow.

It was a strange figure—like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child's proportions. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white as if with age; and yet the fairest had not a wrinkle in it, and the tenderest bloom was on the skin. The arms were very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. Its legs and feet, most delicately formed, were, like the upper members, bare. It wore a tunic of the purest white; and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, had its dress trimmed with white summer flowers. But the strangest thing about it was that from the crown of its head there sprang a bright jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.

Even this, though, when Scrooge looked at it with increasing steadiness, was *not* its strangest quality. For as its belt sparkled and glittered now in one part and now in another, and what was light one instant, at another time was dark, so the figure itself fluctuated in its distinctness: being now a thing with one arm, now with two legs, now with twenty legs, now a pair of legs without

ad, now a head without a body: of which dissolving
arts, no outline would be visible in the dense gloom
herein they melted away. And in the very wonder
this, it would be itself again; distinct and clear as
er.

"Are you the Spirit, Sir, whose coming was foretold
me?" asked Scrooge.

"I am!"

The voice was soft and gentle. Singularly low, as if
stead of being so close beside him, it were at a distance.

"Who, and what are you?" Scrooge demanded.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Past."

"Long past?" inquired Scrooge: observant of its dwarf-
stature.

"No. Your past."

Perhaps, Scrooge could not have told anybody why,
anybody could have asked him; but he had a special
sire to see the Spirit in his cap; and begged him to be
vered.

"What!" exclaimed the Ghost, "would you so soon put
t, with worldly hands, the light I give? Is it not
ough that you are one of those whose passions made
is cap, and force me through whole trains of years to
ear it low upon my brow!"

Scrooge reverently disclaimed all intention to offend,
any knowledge of having wilfully "bonneted" the
irit at any period of his life. He then made bold to
quire what business brought him there.

"Your welfare!" said the Ghost.

Scrooge expressed himself much obliged, but could not
lp thinking that a night of unbroken rest would have
en more conducive to that end. The Spirit must have
ard him thinking, for it said immediately:—

"Your reclamation, then. Take heed!"

*It put out its strong hand as it spoke, and clasped him
by the arm.*

"Rise! and walk with me!"

It would have been in vain for Scrooge to the weather and the hour were not adapted to purposes; that bed was warm, and the *ther*
 5 long way below freezing; that he was clad in his slippers, dressing-gown, and nightcap; *;* had a cold upon him at that time. The *gre*
 gentle as a woman's hand, was not to be resisted but finding that the Spirit made towards *th*
 10 clasped its robe in supplication.

"I am a mortal," Scrooge remonstrated, 'to fall.'

"Bear but a touch of my hand *there*," said laying it upon his heart, "and you shall be uph
 15 than this!"

As the words were spoken, they passed throug and stood upon an open country road, with field hand. The city had entirely vanished. No of it was to be seen. The darkness and the
 20 vanished with it, for it was a clear, cold, winter snow upon the ground.

"Good Heaven!" said Scrooge, clasping together, as he looked about him. "I was b place. I was a boy here!"

25 The Spirit gazed upon him mildly. Its ge though it had been light and instantaneous, ap present to the old man's sense of feeling. H scious of a thousand odours floating in the air connected with a thousand thoughts, and hope: and cares long, long forgotten!

30 "Your lip is trembling," said the Ghost. 'is is that upon your cheek?"

Scrooge muttered, with an unusual catch *voice*, that it was a pimple; and begged the G
 35 *him where he would.*

"You recollect the way?" inquired the Spir

"Remember it!" cried Scrooge with fervour—"I could do it blindfold."

"Strange to have forgotten it for so many years!" cried the Ghost. "Let us go on."

They walked along the road; Scrooge recognizing every and post, and tree; until a little market-town appeared in the distance, with its bridge, its church, and its river. Some shaggy ponies now were seen going towards them with boys upon their backs, who differed from other boys in country gigs and carts, driven by drivers. All these boys were in great spirits, and shouted to each other, until the broad fields were so full of merry voices, that the crisp air laughed to hear it.

"These are but shadows of the things that have been," said the Ghost. "They have no consciousness of us." They were so jocund travellers came on; and as they came, Scrooge knew and named them every one. Why was he so rejoiced beyond all bounds to see them! Why did his eye glisten, and his heart leap up as they went past! It was he filled with gladness when he heard them give out for another Merry Christmas, as they parted at cross-roads and by-ways, for their several homes! What was merry Christmas to Scrooge? Out upon merry Christmas! What good had it ever done to him?

"The school is not quite deserted," said the Ghost. "A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there

Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed.

They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull red brick, with a weathercock-surmounted cupola, on the roof, and a chimney hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken bones; for the spacious offices were little used, their floors were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. Fowls clucked and strutted in the yards; and the coach-houses and sheds were overrun

with grass. Nor was it more retentive of its ancient state, within; for entering the dreary hall, and glancing through the open doors of many rooms, they found them poorly furnished, cold, and vast. There was an *5* *5* savour in the air, a chilly bareness in the place, which associated itself somehow with too much getting up candle-light, and not too much to eat.

They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, across the hall to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made *10* *10* still by lines of plain deal forms and desks. At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his forgotten self as he had used to be.

15 *15* Not a latent echo in the house, not a squeak and scuffle from the mice behind the panelling, not a drip from the half-thawed water-spout in the dull yard behind, not a sigh among the leafless boughs of one despondent poplar, not the idle swinging of an empty store-house door, *20* *20* not a clicking in the fire, but fell upon the heart of Scrooge with softening influence, and gave a freer passage to his tears.

The Spirit touched him on the arm, and pointed to his younger self, intent upon his reading. Suddenly a *25* *25* man in foreign garments: wonderfully real and distinct in look and stature: stood outside the window, with an axe slung in his belt, and leading an ass laden with wood by a bridle.

"Why, it's Ali Baba!" Scrooge exclaimed in ecstasy. *30* *30* "It's dear old honest Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I know! It was Christmas time, when yonder solitary child was left all alone, he *did* come, for the first time, just like the Poor boy! And Valentine," said Scrooge, "and his brother, Orson; there they go! And what's his name *35* *35* who was put down in his drawers, asleep, at the Gate of Damascus; don't you see him! And the Sultan's C

ned upside down by the Gerii; there he is upon his
ad! Serve him right. I'm glad of it. What business
d *he* to be married to the Princess!"

To hear Scrooge expending all the earnestness of his
ture on such subjects, in a most extraordinary voice 5
tween laughing and crying; and to see his heightened
d excited face; would have been a surprise to his busi-
ss friends in the City, indeed.

"There's the Parrot!" cried Scrooge. "Green body
d yellow tail, with a thing like a lettuce growing out 10
the top of his head; there he is! Poor Robin Crusoe,
called him, when he came home again after sailing
and the island. 'Poor Robin Crusoe, where have you
en, Robin Crusoe?' The man thought he was dream-
g, but he wasn't. It was the Parrot, you know. There 13
es Friday, running for his life to the little creek! Halloo!
op! Halloo!"

Then, with a rapidity of transition very foreign to his
ial character, he said, in pity for his former self, "Poor
y!" and cried again.

"I wish," Scrooge muttered, putting his hand in his
cket, and looking about him, after drying his eyes with
cuff: "but it's too late now."

"What is the matter?" asked the Spirit.

"Nothing," said Scrooge. "Nothing. There was a 25
y singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night.
hould like to have given him something: that's all."
The Ghost smiled thoughtfully, and waved its hand:
ing as it did so, "Let us see another Christmas!"

Scrooge's former self grew larger at the words, and the 30
om became a little darker and more dirty. The panels
ank, the windows cracked; fragments of plaster fell
of the ceiling, and the naked laths were shown instead;
how all this was brought about, Scrooge knew no more
n you do. He only knew that it was quite correct; that 35
ything had happened so; that there he was, alone

again, when all the other boys had gone home for the jolly holidays.

He was not reading now, but walking up and down despairingly. Scrooge looked at the Ghost, and with a mournful shaking of his head, glanced anxiously towards the door.

It opened; and a little girl, much younger than the boy, came darting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as her "Dear, dear brother."

"I have come to bring you home, dear brother!" said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh. "To bring you home, home, home!"

"Home, little Fan?" returned the boy.

"Yes!" said the child, brimful of glee. "Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like Heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said Yes, you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you're to be a man!" said the child, opening her eyes, "and are never to come back here; but first, we're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world."

"You are quite a woman, little Fan!" exclaimed the boy.

She clapped her hands and laughed, and tried to touch his head; but being too little, laughed again, and stood on tiptoe to embrace him. Then she began to drag him, in her childish eagerness, towards the door; and he, nothing loath to go, accompanied her.

A terrible voice in the hall cried, "Bring down Master Scrooge's box, there!" and in the hall appeared the school-master himself, who glared on Master Scrooge with a ferocious condescension, and threw him into a dreadful state of mind by shaking hands with him. He then conveyed him and his sister into the veriest old well of

chivering best-parlour that ever was seen, where the maps upon the wall, and the celestial and terrestrial globes in the windows, were waxy with cold. Here he produced a decanter of curiously light wine, and a block of curiously heavy cake, and administered instalments of those dainties 5 to the young people: at the same time, sending out a meagre servant to offer a glass of "something" to the postboy, who answered that he thanked the gentleman, but if it was the same tap as he had tasted before, he had rather not. Master Scrooge's trunk being by this time 10 tied on to the top of the chaise, the children bade the schoolmaster good-by right willingly; and getting into it, drove gayly down the garden-sweep: the quick wheels slashing the hoar-frost and snow from off the dark leaves of the evergreens like spray. 15

"Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered," said the Ghost. "But she had a large heart!"

"So she had," cried Scrooge. "You're right. I'll not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!" 20

"She died a woman," said the Ghost, "and had, as I think, children."

"One child," Scrooge returned.

"True," said the Ghost. "Your nephew!"

Scrooge seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered 25 briefly, "Yes."

Although they had but that moment left the school behind them, they were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city, where shadowy passengers passed and repassed; where shadowy carts and coaches battled for the way, and 30 all the strife and tumult of a real city were. It was made plain enough, by the dressing of the shops, that here too it was Christmas time again; but it was evening, and the streets were lighted up.

The Ghost stopped at a certain warehouse door, and 35 asked Scrooge if he knew it.

"Know it!" said Scrooge. "Was I apprenticed here?"

They went in. At sight of an old gentleman in a Weld wig, sitting behind such a high desk, that if he had been two inches taller he must have knocked his head against the ceiling, Scrooge cried in great excitement:—

"Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig alive again!"

[Old Fezziwig laid down his pen, and looked up at the clock, which pointed to the hour of seven. He rubbed his hands, adjusted his capacious waistcoat, laughed all over himself, from his shoes to his organ of benevolence, and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice:—

"Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick!"

Scrooge's former self, now grown a young man, came briskly in, accompanied by his fellow-prentice.

"Dick Wilkins, to be sure!" said Scrooge to the Ghost. "Bless me, yes. There he is. He was very much attached to me, was Dick. Poor Dick! Dear, dear!"

"Yo ho, my boys!" said Fezziwig. "No more work to-night. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer! Let's have the shutters up," cried old Fezziwig, with a sharp clap of his hands, "before a man can say Jack Robinson!"

You wouldn't believe how those two fellows went at it! They charged into the street with the shutters—one, two, three—had 'em up in their places—four, five, six—barred 'em and pinned 'em—seven, eight, nine—and came back before you could have got to twelve, panting like race-horses.

"Hilli-ho!" cried old Fezziwig, skipping down from the high desk, with wonderful agility. "Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here! Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer!"

Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn't have cleared away, or couldn't have cleared away with old Fezziwig looking on. It was done in a minute. Ever

valuable was packed off, as if it were dismissed from public life for evermore; the floor was swept and watered, the lamps were trimmed, fuel was heaped upon the fire; and the warehouse was as snug, and warm, and dry, and bright a ball-room, as you would desire to see upon a winter's night.

In came a fiddler with a music-book, and went up to the city desk, and made an orchestra of it, and tuned like a y stomach-aches. In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile. In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, charming and lovable. In came the six young followers whose hearts they broke. In came all the young men and men employed in the business. In came the housemaid, and her cousin, the baker. In came the cook, with her mother's particular friend, the milkman. In came the 15
y from over the way, who was suspected of not having heard enough from his master; trying to hide himself behind the girl from next door but one, who was proved to have had her ears pulled by her mistress. In they all came, one after another; some shyly, some boldly, some 20
successfully, some awkwardly, some pushing, some pulling; they all came, anyhow and anyhow. Away they all went, twenty couple at once, hands half round and back again the other way; down the middle and up again; and and round in various stages of affectionate grouping; 25
and top couple always turning up in the wrong place; new couple starting off again, as soon as they got there; top couples at last, and not a bottom one to help them. When this result was brought about, old Fezziwig, clapping his hands to stop the dance, cried out, "Well done!" 30
and the fiddler plunged his hot face into a pot of porter, specially provided for that purpose. But scorning rest upon his reappearance, he instantly began again, though there were no dancers yet, as if the other fiddler had been carried home, exhausted, on a shutter; and he were a new man resolved to beat him out of sight, or perish.

There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake, and there was negus, and there was a great piece of Cold Roast, and there was a great piece of Cold Boiled, and there were mince-pies, and plenty of beer. But the great effect of the evening came after the Roast and Boiled, when the fiddler (a craftful dog, mind! The sort of man who knew his business better than you or I could have told it him!) struck up "Sir Roger de Coverley." Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. Top couple, too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them; three or four and twenty pair of partners; people who were not to be trifled with; people who *would* dance, and had no notion of walking.

But if they had been twice as many: ah, four times as many! old Fezziwig would have been a match for them, and so would Mrs. Fezziwig. As to *her*, she was worthy to be his partner in every sense of the term. If that's not high praise, tell me higher, and I'll use it. A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons. You could have predicted, at any given time, what would become of 'em next. And when old Fezziwig and Mrs. Fezziwig had gone all through the dance; advance and retire, bow and hands with your partner; bow and courtesy; corkscrew, thread-the-needle, and back again to your place; Fezziwig "cut"—cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger.

When the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up. Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas. When everybody had retired but the two 'prentices, they did the same to them; and thus the cheerful voices died away, and the lads were left to their beds; which were under a counter in the back-shop.

During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everything, and underwent the strangest agitation. It was not until now, when the bright faces of his former self and Dick were turned on them, that he remembered the Ghost, and became conscious that it was looking full upon him, while the light upon its head burnt very clear.

"A small matter," said the Ghost, "to make these silly folks so full of gratitude."

"Small!" echoed Scrooge.

The Spirit signed to him to listen to the two apprentices, who were pouring out their hearts in praise of Fezziwig: and when he had done so, said,

"Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of our mortal money: three or four, perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?"

"It isn't that," said Scrooge, heated by the remark, and speaking unconsciously like his former, not his latter, self. "It isn't that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up: what then? The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune."

He felt the Spirit's glance, and stopped.

"What is the matter?" asked the Ghost.

"Nothing particular," said Scrooge.

"Something, I think?" the Ghost insisted.

"No," said Scrooge, "No. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now! That's all."

His former self turned down the lamps as he gave utterance to the wish; and Scrooge and the Ghost again stood side by side in the open air.

"My time grows short," observed the Spirit. "Qu

This was not addressed to Scrooge, or to any one w
he could see, but it produced an immediate effect.
again Scrooge saw himself. He was older now; a
5 in the prime of life. His face had not the harsh and
lines of later years; but it had begun to wear the
of care and avarice. There was an eager, greedy, res
motion in the eye, which showed the passion that
taken root, and where the shadow of the growing
10 would fall.

He was not alone, but sat by the side of a fair y
girl in a mourning-dress: in whose eyes there were t
which sparkled in the light that shone out of the Gho
Christmas Past.

15 "It matters little," she said, softly. "To you,
little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can c
and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tri
do, I have no just cause to grieve."

"What idol has displaced you?" he rejoined.

20 "A golden one."

"This is the even-handed dealing of the world!"
said. "There is nothing on which it is so hard as pov
and there is nothing it professes to condemn with
severity as the pursuit of wealth!"

25 "You fear the world too much," she answered, ge
"All your other hopes have merged into the hope of b
beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have
your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the ma
passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?"

30 "What then?" he retorted. "Even if I have grow
much wiser, what then? I am not changed tow
you."

She shook her head.

"Am I?"

35 "*Our contract is an old one. It was made when
were both poor and content to be so, until, in good s*

He could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You *are* changed. When it was made, you were another man."

"I was a boy," he said impatiently.

"Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are," she returned. "I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you." 10

"Have I ever sought release?"

"In words? No. Never."

"In what, then?"

"In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of life; another Hope as its great end. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been between us," said the girl, looking mildly, but with steadiness, upon him; "tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no!" 20

He seemed to yield to the justice of this supposition, in spite of himself. But he said with a struggle, "You think not."

"I would gladly think otherwise if I could," she answered, "Heaven knows! When I have learned a Truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. But if you were free to-day, to-morrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl—you who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain: or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your guiding principle to do so, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were." 30

He was about to speak; but with her head turned from him, she resumed. 35

"You may—the memory of what is past half make me hope you will—have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened was that you awoke. May you be happy in the life you have chosen!"

She left him, and they parted.

"Spirit!" said Scrooge, "show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?"

10 "One shadow more!" exclaimed the Ghost.

"No more!" cried Scrooge. "No more. I don't wish to see it. Show me no more!"

But the relentless Ghost pinioned him in both his arms and forced him to observe what happened next.

15 They were in another scene and place; a room, not very large or handsome, but full of comfort. Near to the winter fire sat a beautiful young girl, so like the last that Scrooge believed it was the same, until he saw *her*, now a comely matron, sitting opposite her daughter. The noise in this
20 room was perfectly tumultuous, for there were more children there, than Scrooge in his agitated state of mind could count; and, unlike the celebrated herd in the poem, they were not forty children conducting themselves like one, but every child was conducting itself like forty. The consequences were uproarious beyond belief; but no one seemed
25 to care; on the contrary, the mother and daughter laughed heartily, and enjoyed it very much; and the latter, soon beginning to mingle in the sports, got pillaged by the young brigands most ruthlessly. What would I not have given to
30 be one of them! Though I never could have been so rude, no, no! I wouldn't for the wealth of all the world have crushed that braided hair, and torn it down; and for the precious little shoe, I wouldn't have plucked it off, God bless my soul! to save my life. As to measuring her waist in
35 *sport, as they did*, bold young brood, I couldn't have done it; I should have expected my arm to have grown round it

a punishment, and never come straight again. And yet I should have dearly liked, I own, to have touched her lips; to have questioned her, that she might have opened them; to have looked upon the lashes of her downcast eyes, and to have raised a blush; to have let loose waves of hair, any one of which would be a keepsake beyond price: in short, I should have liked, I do confess, to have had the lightest sense of a child, and yet been man enough to know its use.

But now a knocking at the door was heard, and such a tumult immediately ensued that she with laughing face and undressed dress was borne towards it the centre of a flushed and boisterous group just in time to greet the father, who on his home attendance by a man laden with Christmas toys and presents. Then the shouting and the struggling, and the onslaught that was made on the defenseless porter! He scaling him with chairs for ladders to dive into his pocket and despoil him of brown-paper parcels, hold on tight by his cravat, hug him round the neck, pommel his back, and kick his legs in irrepressible affection! The shouts of wonder and delight with which the development of every package was received! The terrible announcement that the boy had been taken in the act of putting a doll's frying-pan into his mouth, and was more than suspected of having swallowed a fictitious turkey, glued on a wooden platter! The immense relief of finding this a false alarm! The joy, the gratitude, and ecstasy! They are all indescribable alike. It is enough that by degrees the children and their emotions got out of the parlour and by one stair at a time, to the top of the house; where they went to bed, and so sided.

And now Scrooge looked on more attentively than ever, even the master of the house, having his daughter leaning fondly on him, sat down with her and her mother at his own side; and when he thought that such another creature, so young as graceful and as full of promise, might have called

him father, and been a spring-time in the haggard winter of his life, his sight grew very dim indeed.

"Belle," said the husband, turning to his wife with a smile, "I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon."

5 "Who was it?"

"Guess!"

"How can I? Tut, don't I know?" she added in the same breath, laughing as he laughed. "Mr. Scrooge."

10 "Mr. Scrooge it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut up, and he had a candle inside, I could scarcely help seeing him. His partner lies upon the point of death, I hear; and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe."

15 "Spirit!" said Scrooge in a broken voice, "remove me from this place."

"I told you these were shadows of the things that have been," said the Ghost. "That they are what they are, and not blame me!"

20 "Remove me!" Scrooge exclaimed, "I cannot bear it!"

He turned upon the Ghost, and seeing that it looked upon him with a face, in which in some strange way there were fragments of all the faces it had shown him, wrestled with it.

"Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!"

25 In the struggle, if that can be called a struggle in which the Ghost with no visible resistance on its own part was undisturbed by any effort of its adversary, Scrooge observed that its light was burning high and bright; and dimly connecting that with its influence over him, he seized the extinguisher-cap, and by a sudden action pressed it down upon his head.

The Spirit dropped beneath it, so that the extinguisher covered its whole form; but though Scrooge pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light which streamed from under it, in an unbroken flood upon the ground. He was conscious of being exhausted, and overcome

■ irresistible drowsiness; and, further, of being in his own
■ bedroom. He gave the cap a parting squeeze, in which
■ his hand relaxed; and had barely time to reel to bed, before
■ he sank into a heavy slumber.

STAVE THREE

THE SECOND OF THE THREE SPIRITS

AWAKING in the middle of a prodigiously tough snore, and sitting up in bed to get his thoughts together, Scrooge had no occasion to be told that the bell was again upon the stroke of One. He felt that he was restored to consciousness in the right nick of time, for the especial purpose of holding a conference with the second messenger despatched to him through Jacob Marley's intervention. But, finding that he turned uncomfortably cold when he began to wonder which of his curtains this new spectre would draw back, he put them every one aside with his own hands, and lying down again, established a sharp lookout all round the bed. For he wished to challenge the Spirit on the moment of its appearance, and did not wish to be taken by surprise and made nervous.

Gentleman of the free-and-easy sort, who plume themselves on being acquainted with a move or two, and begin usually equal to the time-of-day, express the wide range of their capacity for adventure by observing that they are good for anything from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter; between which opposite extremes, no doubt, there lies a tolerably wide and comprehensive range of subjects. Without venturing for Scrooge quite as hardily as this, I don't mind calling on you to believe that he was ready for a good broad field of strange appearances, and that nothing between a baby and rhinoceros would have astonished him very much.

Now, being prepared for almost anything, he was not by *any means* prepared for nothing; and, consequently, when

the Bell struck One, and no shape appeared, he was taken with a violent fit of trembling. Five minutes, ten minutes, quarter of an hour went by, yet nothing came. All this time, he lay upon his bed, the very core and centre of a blaze of ruddy light, which streamed upon it when the clock proclaimed the hour; and which, being only light, was more alarming than a dozen ghosts, as he was powerless to make out what it meant, or would be at; and was sometimes apprehensive that he might be at that very moment an interesting case of spontaneous combustion, without having the consolation of knowing it. At last, however, he began to think—as you or I would have thought at first; for it is always the person not in the predicament who knows what ought to have been done in it, and would unquestionably have done it too—at last, I say, he began to think that the source and secret of this ghostly light might be in the adjoining room, from whence, on further tracing it, it seemed to shine. This idea taking full possession of his mind, he got up softly and shuffled in his slippers to the door.

The moment Scrooge's hand was on the lock, a strange voice called him by his name, and bade him enter. He obeyed.

It was his own room. There was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove, from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there; and such a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney, as that dull petrification of a hearth had never known in Scrooge's time, or Marley's, or for many and many a winter season gone. Taped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-cakes, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-

cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see; who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door.

"Come in!" exclaimed the Ghost. "Come in! and know me better, man!"

Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit. He was not the dogged Scrooge he had been; and though the Spirit's eyes were clear and kind, he did not like to meet them.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Present," said the Spirit. "Look upon me!"

Scrooge reverently did so. It was clothed in one simple deep green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust.

"You have never seen the like of me before!" exclaimed the Spirit.

"Never," Scrooge made answer to it.

"Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers born in these later years?" pursued the Phantom.

"I don't think I have," said Scrooge. "I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?"

"More than eighteen hundred," said the Ghost.

"A tremendous family to provide for!" muttered Scrooge.

The Ghost of Christmas Present rose.

"Spirit," said Scrooge, submissively, "conduct me where 5
you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I
learnt a lesson which is working now. To-night, if you
have aught to teach me, let me profit by it."

"Touch my robe!"

Scrooge did as he was told, and held it fast, 10

Holly, mistletoe, red berries, ivy, turkeys, geese, game,
poultry, brawn, meat, pigs, sausages, oysters, pies, pud-
dings, fruit, and punch, all vanished instantly. So did the
room, the fire, the ruddy glow, the hour of night, and they
stood in the city streets on Christmas morning, where (for 15
the weather was severe) the people made a rough, but brisk
and not unpleasant kind of music, in scraping the snow
from the pavement in front of their dwellings, and from the
tops of their houses: whence it was mad delight to the
boys to see it come plumping down into the road below, 20
and splitting into artificial little snow-storms.

The house fronts looked black enough, and the windows
blacker, contrasting with the smooth white sheet of snow
upon the roofs, and with the dirtier snow upon the ground;
which last deposit had been ploughed up in deep furrows 25
by the heavy wheels of carts and wagons; furrows that
crossed and recrossed each other hundreds of times where
the great streets branched off, and made intricate channels,
hard to trace, in the thick yellow mud and icy water. The
sky was gloomy, and the shortest streets were choked up 30
with a dingy mist, half thawed, half frozen, whose heavier
particles descended in a shower of sooty atoms, as if all
the chimneys in Great Britain had, by one consent,
caught fire, and were blazing away to their dear hearts'
content. There was nothing very cheerful in the climate 35
of the town, and yet was there an air of cheerfulness abroad

that the clearest summer air and brightest summer sun might have endeavoured to diffuse in vain.

For, the people who were shovelling away on the house-tops were jovial and full of glee; calling out to one another from the parapets, and now and then exchanging a facetious snow-ball—better-natured missile far than many a wordy jest—laughing heartily if it went right and not less heartily if it went wrong. The poulterers' shops were still half open, and the fruiterers' were radiant in their glory. There were great, round, pot-bellied baskets of chestnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen, lolling at the doors, and tumbling out into the street in their apoplectic opulence. There were ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish Onions, shining in the fatness of their growth like Spanish Friars; and winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as they went by, and glanced demurely at the hung-up mistletoe. There were pears and apples, clustered high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes, made, in the shopkeepers' benevolence, to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed; there were piles of filberts, mossy and brown, recalling, in their fragrance, ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shufflings ankle deep through withered leaves; there were Norfolk Biffins, squab, and swarthy, setting off the yellow of the oranges and lemons, and, in the great compactness of their juicy persons, urgently entreating and beseeching to be carried home in paper bags and eaten after dinner. The very gold and silver fish, set forth among these choice fruits in a bowl, though members of a dull and stagnant-blooded race, appeared to know that there was something going on; and, to a fish, went gasping round and round their little world in slow and passionless excitement.

The Grocers'! oh the Grocers'! nearly closed, with *ups* two shutters down, or one; but through those *such* glimpses! It was not alone that the scales

ascending on the counter made a merry sound, or that
twine and roller parted company so briskly, or that the
isters were rattled up and down like juggling tricks,
even that the blended scents of tea and coffee were so
teful to the nose, or even that the raisins were so plenti- 5
and rare, the almonds so extremely white, the sticks
cinnamon so long and straight, the other spices so
icious, the candied fruits so caked and spotted with
lten sugar as to make the coldest lookers-on feel faint
l subsequently bilious. Nor was it that the figs were 10
ist and pulpy, or that the French plums blushed in
dest tartness from their highly-decorated boxes, or
t everything was good to eat and in its Christmas dress:
the customers were all so hurried and so eager in the
eful promise of the day, that they tumbled up against 15
h other at the door, clashing their wicker baskets wildly,
l left their purchases upon the counter, and came
ning back to fetch them, and committed hundreds
he like mistakes in the best humour possible; while the
ocer and his people were so frank and fresh that the 20
ished hearts with which they fastened their aprons
ind might have been their own, worn outside for general
pection, and for Christmas daws to peck at if they chose.
But soon the steeples called good people all, to church
l chapel, and away they came, flocking through the 25
ets in their best clothes, and with their gayest faces.
l at the same time there emerged from scores of by-
ets, lanes, and nameless turnings, innumerable people,
rying their dinners to the bakers' shops. The sight
hese poor revellers appeared to interest the Spirit very 30
ch, for he stood with Scrooge beside him in a baker's
rway, and taking off the covers as their bearers passed,
inkled incense on their dinners from his torch. And
as a very uncommon kind of torch, for once or twice
n there were angry words between some dinner- 35
iers who had jostled with each other, he shed a few

drops of water on them from it, and their good hum was restored directly. For they said, it was a shame quarrel upon Christmas Day. And so it was! God it, so it was!

5 In time the bells ceased, and the bakers were shut and yet there was a genial shadowing forth of all the dinners and the progress of their cooking, in the thaw blotch of wet above each baker's oven; where the pavement smoked as if its stones were cooking too.

10 "Is there a peculiar flavour in what you sprinkle from your torch?" asked Scrooge.

"There is. My own."

"Would it apply to any kind of dinner on this day?" asked Scrooge.

15 "To any kindly given. To a poor one most."

"Why to a poor one most?" asked Scrooge.

"Because it needs it most."

"Spirit," said Scrooge, after a moment's thought, wonder you, of all the beings in the many worlds about us, should desire to cramp these people's opportunities of innocent enjoyment."

"I!" cried the Spirit.

"You would deprive them of their means of dining every seventh day, often the only day on which they could be said to dine at all," said Scrooge.

25 "I!" cried the spirit.

"You seek to close these places on the Seventh Day," said Scrooge. "And it comes to the same thing."

"I seek!" exclaimed the Spirit.

30 "Forgive me if I am wrong. It has been done in your name, or at least in that of your family," said Scrooge.

"There are some upon this earth of yours," returned the Spirit, "who lay claim to know us, and who do terrible deeds of passion, pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, selfishness in our name, who are as strange to us and

sith and kin, as if they had never lived. Remember
and charge their doings on themselves, not us.”
rooge promised that he would; and they went on,
ble, as they had been before, into the suburbs of the
. It was a remarkable quality of the Ghost (which 5
oge had observed at the baker’s), that notwithstanding
igantic size, he could accommodate himself to any
with ease; and that he stood beneath a low roof
as gracefully and like a supernatural creature, as
s possible he could have done in any lofty hall. 10
d perhaps it was the pleasure the good Spirit had in
ing off this power of his, or else it was his own kind,
rous, hearty nature, and his sympathy with all poor
that led him straight to Scrooge’s clerk’s; for there
ent, and took Scrooge with him, holding to his robe; 15
on the threshold of the door the Spirit smiled, and
ed to bless Bob Cratchit’s dwelling with the sprin-
s of his torch. Think of that! Bob had but fifteen
,” a-week himself; he pocketed on Saturdays but
n copies of his Christian name; and yet the Ghost 20
ristmas Present blessed his four-roomed house!
en up rose Mrs. Cratchit, Cratchit’s wife, dressed
ut poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons,
h are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence;
she laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda Cratchit, 25
id of her daughters, also brave in ribbons; while
er Peter Cratchit plunged a fork into the saucepan
atoes, and getting the corners of his monstrous shirt
(Bob’s private property, conferred upon his son
heir in honour of the day) into his mouth, rejoiced 30
nd himself so gallantly attired, and yearned to show
men in the fashionable Parks. And now two smaller
chits, boy and girl, came tearing in, screaming that
de the baker’s they had smelt the goose, and known
their own; and basking in luxurious thoughts of 35
nd-onion, these young Cratchits danced about the

table, and exalted Master Peter Cratchit to the sky while he (not proud, although his collars nearly choked him) blew the fire, until the slow potatoes bubbling knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid to be let out and peeled.

“What has ever got your precious father then?” said Mrs. Cratchit. “And your brother, Tiny Tim! And Martha warn’t as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour!”

“Here’s Martha, mother!” said a girl, appearing as if by magic.

“Here’s Martha, mother!” cried the two young Cratchits. “Hurrah! There’s *such* a goose, Martha!”

“Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!” said Mrs. Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal.

“We’d a deal of work to finish up last night,” replied the girl, “and had to clear away this morning, mother!”

“Well! Never mind so long as you are come,” said Mrs. Cratchit. “Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!”

“No, no! There’s father coming,” cried the two young Cratchits, who were everywhere at once. “Hide, Martha, hide!”

So Martha hid herself, and in came little Bob, the father with at least three feet of comforter exclusive of the fringe hanging down before him; and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame!

“Why, where’s our Martha?” cried Bob Cratchit, looking round.

“Not coming,” said Mrs. Cratchit.

“Not coming!” said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tim’s blood horse all the way from church, and had come home rampant. “Not coming upon Christmas Day!”

Artha didn't like to see him disappointed, if it were only
joke; so she came out prematurely from behind the
set door, and ran into his arms, while the two young
Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-
house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the cop- 5

"And how did little Tim behave?" asked Mrs. Cratchit,
when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had
regaled his daughter to his heart's content.

"As good as gold," said Bob, "and better. Somehow he 10
is thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the
strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home,
that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he
is a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remem-
ber upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk 15
and blind men see."

Bob's voice was tremulous when he told them this, and
trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing
strong and hearty.

His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and 20
next came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken,
supported by his brother and sister to his stool before the fire;
and while Bob, turning up his cuffs—as if, poor fellow, they
were capable of being made more shabby—compounded
the hot mixture in a jug with gin and lemons, and stirred 25
round and round and put it on the hob to simmer; Mas-
ter Peter, and the two ubiquitous young Cratchits went to
fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high pro-
cession.

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a 30
rose the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon, to
which a black swan was a matter of course—and in truth it
is something very like it in that house. Mrs. Cratchit
made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan)
singing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incred- 35
ible vigour; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce;

Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young chits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting their and mounting guard upon their posts, crammed
5 into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose their turn came to be helped. At last the dish set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly at the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the bre
10 when she did, and when the long expected gush of issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all around the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young chits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife and feebly cried Hurrah!

15 There never was such a goose. Bob said he did not believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by the apple-sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the family; indeed, as Mrs. Cratchit said with great
20 (surveying one small atom of a bone upon the dish) hadn't ate it all at last! Yet every one had had a share, and the youngest Cratchits in particular, were satisfied with sage and onion to the eyebrows! But now, the being changed by Miss Belinda, Mrs. Cratchit
25 room alone—too nervous to bear witnesses—to take the pudding up and bring it in.

Suppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out! Suppose somebody
30 have got over the wall of the back-yard, and stolen it! They were merry with the goose—a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid! All sorts of things were supposed.

Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out on
the copper. A smell like a washing-day! That was the
both. A smell like an eating-house and a pas

next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that! That was the pudding! In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered—flushed, but smiling proudly—with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, blazing in half of half-a-quartern of ignited brandy, and dight with Christmas holly stuck into the top. 5

Oh, a wonderful pudding! Bob Cratchit said, and implicitly too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage. Mrs. Cratchit said that now the weight was off her mind, she could confess she had had her doubts about the quantity of flour. Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing. 10 15

At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire made up. The compound in the jug being tasted, and considered perfect, apples and oranges were put upon the table, and a shovel-full of chestnuts on the fire. Then all the Cratchit family drew around the hearth, in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, meaning half a one; and at Bob Cratchit's elbow stood the family display of glass. Two tumblers, and a custard-cup without a handle. 20 25

These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as silver goblets would have done; and Bob served it out with flaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed:—

"A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!" Which all the family re-echoed. 30

"God bless us every one!" said Tiny Tim, the last of all. He sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him. 35

"Spirit," said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, "tell me if Tiny Tim will live."

"I see a vacant seat," replied the Ghost, "in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die."

"No, no," said Scrooge. "Oh, no, kind Spirit! say he will be spared."

"If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race," returned the Ghost, "will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population."

Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief.

"Man," said the Ghost, "if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child. Oh, God to hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust!"

Scrooge bent before the Ghost's rebuke, and trembling cast his eyes upon the ground. But he raised them speedily, on hearing his own name.

"Mr. Scrooge!" said Bob; "I'll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!"

"The Founder of the Feast indeed!" cried Mrs. Cratchit, reddening. "I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it."

"My dear," said Bob, "the children! Christmas Day."

"It should be Christmas Day, I am sure," said she, "on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, hard-living man as Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert; 'y knows it better than you do, poor fellow!"

My dear," was Bob's mild answer, "Christmas Day." I'll drink his health for your sake and the Day's," said s. Cratchit, "not for his. Long life to him! A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! He'll be very merry happy, I have no doubt!"

The children drank the toast after her. It was the first of their proceedings which had no heartiness in it. Tiny Tim drank it last of all, but he didn't care twopence for it. Bob was the Ogre of the family. The mention of his name cast a dark shadow on the party, which was not dissipated for full five minutes.

After it had passed away, they were ten times merrier than before, from the mere relief of Scrooge the Boleful being done with. Bob Cratchit told them how he had a situation in his eye for Master Peter, which would bring in, if lined, full five-and-sixpence weekly. The two young Cratchits laughed tremendously at the idea of Peter's being an expert of business; and Peter himself looked thoughtfully at fire from between his collars, as if he were deliberating on particular investments he should favour when he came into the receipt of that bewildering income. Martha, a poor apprentice at a milliner's, then told them the kind of work she had to do, and how many hours she worked at a stretch, and how she meant to lie abed to-morrow morning for a good long rest; to-morrow being a holiday she passed at home. Also how she had seen a countess and a lord some days before, and how the lord "was much taller than as tall as Peter;" at which Peter pulled up his collar and sighed that you couldn't have seen his head if you had been there. All this time the chestnuts and the jug went hot and round; and by-and-by they had a song about a little child travelling in the snow, from Tiny Tim, who had a plaintive little voice, and sang it very well indeed.

There was nothing of high mark in this. They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being water-proof; their clothes were scanty;

and Peter might have known, and very likely did of a pawnbroker's. But, they were happy pleased with one another, and contented with them when they faded, and looked happier yet in the sprinklings of the Spirit's torch at parting, Scrooge eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, un-

By this time it was getting dark, and snow heavily; and as Scrooge and the Spirit went along the brightness of the roaring fires in kitchens and all sorts of rooms, was wonderful. Here, the of the blaze showed preparations for a cook with hot plates baking through and through beef and deep red curtains, ready to be drawn to show and darkness. There, all the children of the running out into the snow to meet their married brothers, cousins, uncles, aunts, and be the first to them. Here, again, were shadows on the walls of guests assembling; and there a group of hand all hooded and fur-booted, and all chattering, tripped lightly off to some near neighbour's home, woe upon the single man who saw them enter the witches! well they knew it—in a glow!

But if you had judged from the numbers of their way to friendly gatherings, you might have thought that no one was at home to give them welcome, got there, instead of every house expecting company, piling up its fires half-chimney high. Blessings how the Ghost exulted! How it bared its breast, and opened its capacious palm, and outpouring, with a generous hand, its bright and mirth, on everything within its reach! The lamplighter, who ran on before dotting the dusky specks of light, and who was dressed to spend time somewhere, laughed out loudly as the Spirit passed little kenned the lamplighter that he had any but Christmas!

and now, without a word of warning from the Ghost, stood upon a bleak and desert moor, where monstrous masses of rude stone were cast about, as though it were the burial-place of giants; and water spread itself everywhere it listed, or would have done so, but for the ice that held it prisoner; and nothing grew but moss and rank grass. Down in the west the setting sun had left a streak of fiery red, which glared upon the desolation for an instant, like a sullen eye, and frowned lower, lower, lower yet, was lost in the thick gloom of the darkest night.

"What place is this?" asked Scrooge.

"A place where Miners live who labour in the bowels of the earth," returned the Spirit. "But they know me."

A light shone from the window of a hut, and swiftly advanced towards it. Passing through the wall of ice and stone, they found a cheerful company assembled round a glowing fire. An old, old man and woman, with their children and their children's children, and another generation beyond that, all decked out gayly in their holiday attire. The old man in a voice that seldom rose above the howling of the wind upon the barren waste, was singing them a Christmas song; it had been a very old song when he was a boy; and from time to time they all joined in the chorus. So surely as they raised their voices, the old man got quite blithe and loud; and so surely as they stopped, his vigour sank again.

The Spirit did not tarry here, but bade Scrooge hold his breath, and passing on above the moor, sped whither? To sea? To sea. To Scrooge's horror, looking back, he saw the last of the land, a frightful range of rocks, wind them; and his ears were deafened by the thundering water, as it rolled, and roared, and raged among the awful caverns it had worn and fiercely tried to undermine the earth.

Built upon a dismal reef of sunken rocks, some or so from shore, on which the waters chafed and the wild year through, there stood a solitary light. Great heaps of seaweed clung to its base, and stored—born of the wind one might suppose as seaweed—rose and fell about it, like the waves they sh

But even here, two men who watched the light had a fire, that through the loophole in the thick stone shed out a ray of brightness on the awful sea.
10 their horny hands over the rough table at which they wished each other Merry Christmas in their grog; and one of them: the elder, too, with his damaged and scarred with hard weather, as the head of an old ship might be: struck up a sturd that was like a Gale in itself.
15

Again the Ghost sped on, above the black and sea—on, on—until, being far away, as he told from any shore, they lighted on a ship. They stood the helmsman at the wheel, the look-out in the lower officers who had the watch; dark, ghostly figures several stations; but every man among them had a Christmas tune, or had a Christmas thought, or below his breath to his companion of some Christmas Day, with homeward hopes belonging.
25 And every man on board, waking or sleeping, good had had a kinder word for another on that day than day in the year; and had shared to some extent in festivities; and had remembered those he cared for, and had known that they delighted to remember.

It was a great surprise to Scrooge, while listening to the moaning of the wind, and thinking what a soler it was to move on through the lonely darkness unknown abyss, whose depths were secrets as just as Death: it was a great surprise to Scrooge, when
30 engaged, to hear a hearty laugh. It was a much surprise to Scrooge to recognize it as his own new

find himself in a bright, dry, gleaming room, with the spirit standing smiling by his side, and looking at that nephew with approving affability.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Scrooge's nephew. "Ha, ha, ha!"

If you should happen, by any unlikely chance, to know a man more blest in a laugh than Scrooge's nephew, all I can say is, I should like to know him too. Introduce him to me, and I'll cultivate his acquaintance.

It is a fair, even-handed, noble adjustment of things, that while there is infection in disease and sorrow, there is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good-humour. When Scrooge's nephew laughed in this way: holding his sides, rolling his head, and casting his face into the most extravagant contortions: Scrooge's niece, by marriage, laughed as heartily as he. And their assembled friends being not a bit behindhand, laughed out lustily.

"Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

He said that Christmas was a humbug, as I live!" said Scrooge's nephew. "He believed it too!"

More shame for him, Fred!" said Scrooge's niece, indignantly. Bless those women; they never do anything by halves. They are always in earnest.

She was very pretty; exceedingly pretty. With a ruffled, surprised-looking, capital face; a ripe little mouth, that seemed made to be kissed—as no doubt it was; all kinds of good little dots about her chin, that melted into one another when she laughed; and the sunniest pair of eyes you ever saw in any little creature's face. Altogether she was what you would have called a lovely, you know; but satisfactory, too. Oh, perfectly satisfactory!

"He's a comical old fellow," said Scrooge's nephew, "but that's the truth; and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him."

"I'm sure he is very rich, Fred," hinted Scrooge's niece.
 "At least you always tell *me* so."

"What of that, my dear!" said Scrooge's nephew.
 "His wealth is of no use to him. He don't do any good
 5 with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. He
 hasn't the satisfaction of thinking—ha, ha, ha!—that
 he is ever going to benefit *Us* with it."

"I have no patience with him," observed Scrooge's
 niece. Scrooge's niece's sisters, and all the other ladies
 10 expressed the same opinion.

"Oh, I have!" said Scrooge's nephew. "I am sorry
 for him; I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. Why
 suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always. Here, he
 takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come
 15 dine with us. What's the consequence? He don't lose
 much of a dinner."

"Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner," interrupted
 Scrooge's niece. Everybody else said the same thing,
 and they must be allowed to have been competent judges
 20 because they had just had dinner; and, with the dishes
 upon the table, were clustered round the fire, by the
 light.

"Well! I'm very glad to hear it," said Scrooge's nephew.
 "because I haven't any great faith in these young house-
 25 keepers. What do *you* say, Topper?"

Topper had clearly got his eye upon one of Scrooge's
 niece's sisters, for he answered that a bachelor was
 a wretched outcast, who had no right to express an opinion
 on the subject. Whereat Scrooge's niece's sister—
 30 plump one with the lace tucker: not the one with the
 —blushed.

"Do go on, Fred," said Scrooge's niece, clapping her
 hands. "He never finishes what he begins to say! He
 is such a ridiculous fellow!"

35 Scrooge's nephew revelled in another laugh, and it
 was impossible to keep the infection off; though

p sister tried hard to do it with aromatic vinegar; example was unanimously followed.

was only going to say," said Scrooge's nephew, the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some 5
important moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office, or his study chambers. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He 10
sighs at Christmas till he dies, but he can't help thinking of it—I defy him—if he finds me going there, in my own temper, year after year, and saying 'Uncle Scrooge, are you?' If it only puts him in the vein to leave his clerk fifty pounds, *that's* something; and I think I 15
kissed him yesterday."

It was their turn to laugh now at the notion of his shaking Scrooge. But being thoroughly good-natured, and not caring what they laughed at, so that they laughed freely at rate, he encouraged them in their merriment, and 20
passed the bottle joyously.

After tea, they had some music. For they were a musical family, and knew what they were about, when they sang a Glee or Catch, I can assure you: especially the poor, who could growl away in the bass like a good one, 25
never swell the large veins in his forehead, or get red in the face over it. Scrooge's niece played well upon the piano; and played among other tunes a simple little air (which were nothing: you might learn to whistle it in two minutes), which had been familiar to the child who 30
had saved Scrooge from the boarding-school, as he had been rescued by the Ghost of Christmas Past. When this strain of music sounded, all the things that Ghost had shown him, came upon his mind; he softened more and more; and thought that if he could have listened to it 35
many years ago, he might have cultivated the kindnesses

of life for his own happiness with his own hands, without resorting to the sexton's spade that buried Jacob Marley.

But they didn't devote the whole evening to music. After a while they played at forfeits; for it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas when its mighty Founder was a child himself. Stop! There was first a game at blind-man's buff. Of course there was. And I no more believe Topper was really blind than I believe he had eyes in his boots. My opinion is, that it was a done thing between him and Scrooge's nephew: and that the Ghost of Christmas Present knew it. The way he went after that plump sister in the last tucker, was an outrage on the credulity of human nature. Knocking down the fire-irons, tumbling over the chairs, bumping up against the piano, smothering himself among the curtains, wherever she went, there went he. He always knew where the plump sister was. He wouldn't catch anybody else. If you had fallen up against him as some of them did, and stood there; he would have made a feint of endeavouring to seize you, which would have been an affront to your understanding; and would instantly have sidled off in the direction of the plump sister. She often cried out that it wasn't fair; and it really was not. But when at last, he caught her; when in spite of all her silken rustlings, and her rapid fluttering past him, he got her into a corner whence there was no escape; then his conduct was the most execrable. For his pretending not to know her; his pretending that it was necessary to touch her head-dress, and further to assure himself of her identity by pressing a certain ring upon her finger, and a certain chain about her neck; was vile monstrous! No doubt she told him her opinion of it when, another blind man being in office, they were *very confidential* together, behind the curtains.

Scrooge's niece was not one of the blind-man's party, but was made comfortable with a large chair

footstool, in a snug corner, where the Ghost and Scrooge were close behind her. But she joined in the forfeits, and loved her love to admiration with all the letters of the alphabet. Likewise at the game of How, When, and Where, she was very great, and to the secret joy of Scrooge's nephew, beat her sisters hollow: though they were sharp girls too, as Topper could have told you. There might have been twenty people there, young and old, but they all played, and so did Scrooge; for, wholly forgetting in the interest he had in what was going on, that his voice made no sound in their ears, he sometimes came out with his guess quite loud, and very often guessed quite right, too; for the sharpest needle, best Whitechapel, warranted not to cut in the eye was not sharper than Scrooge; blunt as he took it in his head to be.

The Ghost was greatly pleased to find him in this mood and looked upon him with such favour that he begged like a boy to be allowed to stay until the guests departed. But this the Spirit said could not be done.

"Here is a new game," said Scrooge. "One half-hour, Spirit, only one!"

It is a Game called Yes and No, where Scrooge's nephew had to think of something, and the rest must find out what; he only answering to their questions yes or no, as the case was. The brisk fire of questioning to which he was exposed, elicited from him that he was thinking of an animal, a live animal, rather a disagreeable animal, a savage animal, an animal that growled and grunted sometimes, and talked sometimes, and lived in London, and walked about the streets, and wasn't made a show of, and wasn't led by anybody, and didn't live in a menagerie, and was never killed in a market, and was not a horse, or an ass, or a cow, or a bull, or a tiger, or a dog, or a pig, or a cat, or a bear. At every fresh question that was put to him, this nephew burst into a fresh roar of laughter; and was so inexpressibly tickled, that he was obliged to get up off the sofa and

stamp. At last the plump sister, falling into a state, cried out:—

“I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I what it is!”

5 “What is it?” cried Fred.

“It’s your Uncle Scro-o-o-o-o-ge!”

Which it certainly was. Admiration was the un-
sentiment, though some objected that the reply to “
bear?” ought to have been “Yes;” inasmuch as a
10 swer in the negative was sufficient to have diverted
thoughts from Mr. Scrooge, supposing they had even
any tendency that way.

“He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure,
Fred, “and it would be ungrateful not to drink his
15 Here is a glass of mulled wine ready to our hand
moment; and I say, ‘Uncle Scrooge!’”

“Well! Uncle Scrooge!” they cried.

“A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to
man, whatever he is!” said Scrooge’s nephew. “He
20 n’t take it from me, but may he have it, never
Uncle Scrooge!”

Uncle Scrooge had imperceptibly become so ga-
light of heart, that he would have pledged the uncor-
company in return, and thanked them in an in-
25 speech, if the Ghost had given him time. But the
scene passed off in the breath of the last word spoken
nephew; and he and the Spirit were again upon their

Much they saw, and far they went, and many hom-
visited, but always with a happy end. The Spirit
30 beside sick beds, and they were cheerful; on foreign
and they were close at home; by struggling men, and
were patient in their greater hope; by poverty, and
rich. In almshouse, hospital, and jail, in misery’s
refuge, where vain man in his little brief authori-
35 *not made fast* the door, and barred the Spirit out,
his blessing, and taught Scrooge his precepts.

It was a long night, if it were only a night; but Scrooge had his doubts of this, because the Christmas Holidays appeared to be condensed into the space of time they passed together. It was, strange, too, that while Scrooge remained unaltered in his outward form, the Ghost grew
er, clearly older. Scrooge had observed this change,

never spoke of it, until they left a children's Twelfth Night party, when, looking at the Spirit as they stood together in an open place, he noticed that its hair was gray.

"Are spirits' lives so short?" asked Scrooge.

"My life upon this globe, is very brief," replied the Ghost. "It ends to-night."

"To-night!" cried Scrooge.

"To-night at midnight. Hark! The time is drawing near."

The chimes were ringing the three quarters past eleven that moment.

"Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask," said Scrooge, looking intently at the Spirit's robe, "but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw?"

"It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it," said the Spirit's sorrowful reply. "Look here."

From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They crouched down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.

"Oh, Man! look here. Look, look, down here!" exclaimed the Ghost.

They were a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have
enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing.

No change, no degradation, no perversion of human any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful has monsters half so horrible and dread.

Scrooge started back, appalled. Having the
5 to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine but the words choked themselves, rather than be a lie of such enormous magnitude.

"Spirit! are they yours?" Scrooge could say no

"They are Man's," said the Spirit, looking down
10 them. "And they cling to me, appealing for fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but more beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny
15 the Spirit, stretching out its hand toward the city, der those who tell it ye! Admit it for your fact poses, and make it worse! And bide the end!"

"Have they no refuge or resource?" cried Scrooge

"Are there no prisons?" said the Spirit, turning
20 for the last time with his own words. "Are there houses?"

The bell struck twelve.

Scrooge looked about him for the Ghost, and saw
As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he remembered
25 prediction of old Jacob Marley, and lifting up his head beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, like a mist along the ground, towards him.

STAVE FOUR

THE LAST OF THE SPIRITS

THE Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached. When it came near him, Scrooge bent down upon his knee; or in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery.

It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. But for this it would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded. 5 10

He felt that it was tall and stately when it came beside him, and that its mysterious presence filled him with a solemn dread. He knew no more, for the Spirit neither spoke nor moved.

"I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?" said Scrooge. 15

The Spirit answered not, but pointed downward with its hand.

"You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us," Scrooge pursued. "Is that so, Spirit?" 20

The upper portion of the garment was contracted for an instant in its folds, as if the Spirit had inclined its head. That was the only answer he received.

Although well used to ghostly company by this time, Scrooge feared the silent shape so much that his legs trembled beneath him, and he found that he could hardly stand when he prepared to follow it. The Spirit paused a 25 30

moment, as observing his condition, and giving him to recover.

But Scrooge was all the worse for this. It thrilled with a vague uncertain horror, to know that beneath that dusky shroud there were ghostly eyes intently fixed upon him, while he, though he stretched his own to the utmost, could see nothing but a spectral hand and one gleam of black.

"Ghost of the Future!" he exclaimed, "I fear you more than any Spectre I have seen. But, as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be of service to other men from what I was, I am prepared to obey your company, and do it with a thankful heart. Will you speak to me?"

It gave him no reply. The hand was pointed downwards before them.

"Lead on!" said Scrooge. "Lead on! The time is waning fast, and it is precious time to me, I know. On, Spirit!"

The Phantom moved away as it had come towards him. Scrooge followed in the shadow of its dress, which bore him up, he thought, and carried him along.

They scarcely seemed to enter the city; for the city seemed to spring up about them, and encompass them in its own act. But there they were, in the heart of the great 'Change, amongst the merchants; who hurried past them in their down, and chinked the money in their pockets, and conversed in groups, and looked at their watches, and thoughtfully with their great gold seals; and so forth. Scrooge had seen them often.

The Spirit stopped beside one little knot of business men. Observing that the hand was pointed to them, they advanced to listen to their talk.

"No," said a great fat man with a monstrous countenance, "I don't know much about it, either way. I only know this."

"When did he die?" inquired another.

"Last night, I believe."

"Why, what was the matter with him?" asked a third, taking a vast quantity of snuff out of a very large snuff-box. "I thought he'd never die."

"God knows," said the first, with a yawn.

"What has he done with his money?" asked a red-faced gentleman with a pendulous excrescence on the end of his nose, that shook like the gills of a turkey-cock.

"I haven't heard," said the man with the large chin, yawning again. "Left it to his Company, perhaps. He hasn't left it to *me*. That's all I know."

This pleasantry was received with a general laugh.

"It's likely to be a very cheap funeral," said the same speaker; "for upon my life I don't know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?"

"I don't mind going if a lunch is provided," observed the gentleman with the excrescence on his nose. "But I must be fed, if I make one."

Another laugh.

"Well, I am the most disinterested among you, after all," said the first speaker, "for I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I'll offer to go, if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I'm not at all sure that I wasn't *his* most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. Bye, bye!"

Speakers and listeners strolled away, and mixed with other groups. Scrooge knew the men, and looked toward the Spirit for an explanation.

The Phantom glided on into a street. Its finger pointed to two persons meeting. Scrooge listened again, thinking that the explanation might lie here.

He knew these men, also, perfectly. They were men of business: very wealthy, and of great importance. He had made a point always of standing well in their esteem: in

a business point of view, that is; strictly in a business point of view.

"How are you?" said one.

"How are you?" returned the other.

5 "Well!" said the first. "Old Scratch has got his own last, hey?"

"So I am told," returned the second. "Cold, isn't it?"

"Seasonable for Christmas time. You're not a skater, I suppose?"

10 "No. No. Something else to think of. Good morning!"

Not another word. That was their greeting, their conversation, and their parting.

Scrooge was at first inclined to be surprised that the Spirit should attach importance to conversations apparently so trivial; but feeling assured that they must have some hidden purpose, he set himself to consider what was likely to be. They could scarcely be supposed to have any bearing, on the death of Jacob, his old partner, but that was Past, and this Ghost's province was the Future. 20 Nor could he think of any one immediately connected with himself, to whom he could apply them. But nothing doubting that to whomsoever they applied they had some latent moral for his own improvement, he resolved to treasure up every word he heard, and everything he saw, and especially to observe the shadow of himself when 25 appeared. For he had an expectation that the conduct of his future self would give him the clew he missed, and would render the solution of these riddles easy.

He looked about in that very place for his own image, 30 but another man stood in his accustomed corner, and though the clock pointed to his usual time of day for being there, he saw no likeness of himself among the multitude that poured in through the Porch. It gave him little surprise, however; for he had been revolving in his mind 35 *change of life*, and thought and hoped he saw his new resolutions carried out in this.

quiet and dark, beside him stood the Phantom, with its stretched hand. When he aroused himself from his thoughtful quest, he fancied from the turn of the hand, and situation in reference to himself, that the Unseen Eyes were looking at him keenly. It made him shudder, and very cold. 5

They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town, where Scrooge had never penetrated before, though he recognized its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses crisscrossed; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offences of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, filth, and misery. 15

Far in this den of infamous resort, there was a low-arched, beetling shop, below a pent-house roof, where old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal, were sold. Upon the floor within, were piled up heaps of rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights, and base iron of all kinds. Secrets that few would like to divulge were bred and hidden in mountains of unseemly rags, masses of corrupt fat, and sepulchres of bones. Tucked in among the wares he dealt in, by a charcoal-stove, made of old bricks, was a gray-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age; who had screened himself from the cold air without, by a frowzy curtaining of miscellaneous tatters, hung upon a line; and smoked his pipe in all the privacy of calm retirement. 25

Scrooge and the Phantom came into the presence of this man, just as a woman with a heavy bundle slunk into the shop. But she had scarcely entered, when another man, similarly laden, came in too; and she was closely followed by a man in faded black, who was no less startled at the sight of them, than they had been upon the recognition of each other. After a short period of blank aston- 35

ishment, in which the old man with the pipe had joined them, they all three burst into a laugh.

"Let the charwoman alone to be the first!" cried who had entered first. "Let the laundress alone to be the second; and let the undertaker's man alone to be third. Look here, old Joe, here's a chance! If haven't all three met here without meaning it!"

"You couldn't have met in a better place," said old removing his pipe from his mouth. "Come into the parlour. You were made free of it long ago, you know; the other two an't strangers. Stop till I shut the door the shop. Ah! How it skreeks! There an't such a rubbit of metal in the place as its own hinges, I believe; I'm sure there's no such old bones here, as mine. Ha, 15 We're all suitable to our calling, we're well matched. Come into the parlour. Come into the parlour."

The parlour was the space behind the screen of the door. The old man raked the fire together with an old stove rod and having trimmed his smoky lamp (for 20 was night) with the stem of his pipe, put it in his mouth again.

While he did this, the woman who had already spoken threw her bundle on the floor, and sat down in a flaunt manner on a stool; crossing her elbows on her knees, and 25 looking with a bold defiance at the other two.

"What odds then! What odds, Mrs. Dilber?" said the woman. "Every person has a right to take care of themselves. *He* always did!"

"That's true, indeed!" said the laundress. "No more so."

"Why, then, don't stand staring as if you was afraid of the woman; who's the wiser? We're not going to pick holes in each other's coats, I suppose?"

"No, indeed!" said Mrs. Dilber and the man together. "We should hope not."

"Very well, then!" cried the woman. "That's enough."

o's the worse for the loss of a few things like these?
t a dead man, I suppose."

No, indeed," said Mrs. Dilber, laughing.

If he wanted to keep 'em after he was dead, a wicked
screw," pursued the woman, "why wasn't he natural 5
his lifetime? If he had been, he'd have had somebody
ook after him when he was struck with Death, instead
ying gasping out his last there, alone by himself."

It's the truest word that ever was spoke," said Mrs. Dil-

"It's a judgment on him."

I wish it was a little heavier one," replied the woman;
d it should have been, you may depend upon it, if I
ld have laid my hands on anything else. Open that
dle, old Joe, and let me know the value of it. Speak
plain. I'm not afraid to be the first, nor afraid for 15
n to see it. We knew pretty well that we were helping
selves, before we met here, I believe. It's no sin.
n the bundle, Joe."

ut the gallantry of her friends would not allow of this;
the man in faded black, mounting the breach first, 20
luced *his* plunder. It was not extensive. A seal or
a pencil-case, a pair of sleeve-buttons, and a brooch
o great value, were all. They were severally examined
appraised by old Joe, who chalked the sums he was
osed to give for each, upon the wall, and added them 25
nto a total when he found there was nothing more
ome.

That's your account," said Joe, "and I wouldn't give
her sixpence, if I was to be boiled for not doing it.
o's next?"

rs. Dilber was next. Sheets and towels, a little wear-
apparel, two old-fashioned silver teaspoons, a pair
agar-tongs, and a few boots. Her account was stated
he wall in the same manner.

*always give too much to ladies. It's a weakness of 30
and that's the way I ruin myself,"* said old Joe.

"That's your account. If you asked me for a penny, and made it an open question, I'd repent of so liberal and knock off half-a-crown."

"And now undo *my* bundle, Joe," said the first w
5 Joe went down on his knees for the greater conveyance of opening it, and having unfastened a great many, dragged out a large and heavy roll of some dark stuff.

"What do you call this?" said Joe. "Bed-curtain."

"Ah!" returned the woman, laughing and leaning
10 ward on her crossed arms. "Bed-curtains!"

"You don't mean to say you took 'em down, ring all, with him lying there?" said Joe.

"Yes I do," replied the woman. "Why not?"

"You were born to make your fortune," said Joe,
15 you'll certainly do it."

"I certainly shan't hold my hand, when I can get something in it by reaching it out, for the sake of such a man as He was, I promise you, Joe," returned the woman coolly. "Don't drop that oil upon the blankets, I

20 "His blankets?" asked Joe.

"Whose else's do you think?" replied the woman. "Isn't likely to take cold without 'em, I dare say."

"I hope he didn't die of anything catching?" said old Joe, stopping in his work, and looking up.

25 "Don't you be afraid of that," returned the woman. "I an't so fond of his company that I'd loiter about for such things, if he did. Ah! you may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won't find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It's the best I ever had, and a fine one too. They'd have wasted it, hadn't been for me."

"What do you call wasting of it?" asked old Joe.

"Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure," returned the woman with a laugh. "Somebody was foolish enough
30 to do it, but I took it off again. If calico ain't good enough for such a purpose, it isn't good enough for a

as becoming to the body. He can't look uglier
did in that one."

ge listened to this dialogue in horror. As they
ped about their spoil, in the scanty light afforded
old man's lamp, he viewed them with a detestation 5
just, which could hardly have been greater, though
d been obscene demons, marketing the corpse

ha!" laughed the same woman, when old Joe,
ag a flannel bag with money in it, told out their 10
gains upon the ground. "This is the end of it, you
e frightened every one away from him when he was
profit us when he was dead! Ha, ha, ha!"

it!" said Scrooge, shuddering from head to foot.
I see. The case of this unhappy man might be 15
. My life tends that way, now. Merciful Heaven,
this!"

coiled in terror, for the scene had changed, and
almost touched a bed: a bare, uncurtained bed:
h, beneath a ragged sheet, there lay a something 20
up, which, though it was dumb, announced itself
l language.

room was very dark, too dark to be observed with
racy, though Scrooge glanced round it in obedience
ret impulse, anxious to know what kind of room 25

A pale light, rising in the outer air, fell straight
e bed; and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched,
uncared for, was the body of this man.

ge glanced towards the Phantom. Its steady hand
nted to the head. The cover was so carelessly 30
l that the slightest raising of it, the motion of a
pon Scrooge's part, would have disclosed the face.
ght of it, felt how easy it would be to do, and longed

but had no more power to withdraw the veil than
ss the spectre at his side. 35
d, cold, rigid, dreadful Death, set up thine altar

here, and dress it with such terrors as thou hast at command: for this is thy dominion! But of the revered, and honoured head, thou canst not turn one to thy dread purposes, or make one feature odious. 5 is not that the hand is heavy and will fall down released; it is not that the heart and pulse are still; that the hand was open, generous, and true; the brave, warm, and tender; and the pulse a man's. So Shadow, strike! And see his good deeds springing from the wound, to sow the world with life immortal! 10

No voice pronounced these words in Scrooge's ears, and yet he heard them when he looked upon the bed. He thought, if this man could be raised up now, what would be his foremost thoughts? Avarice, hard dealing, grasping cares? They have brought him to a rich end, truly! 15

He lay in the dark empty house, with not a man, woman, or a child, to say that he was kind to me in the past, or that, and for the memory of one kind word I will be kind to him. A cat was tearing at the door, and there was 20 sound of gnawing rats beneath the hearth-stone. When they wanted in the room of death, and why they were so restless and disturbed, Scrooge did not dare to think. "Spirit!" he said, "this is a fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go!" Still the Ghost pointed with an unmoved finger to his head. 25

"I understand you," Scrooge returned, "and I would do it, if I could. But I have not the power, Spirit. I have not the power."

30 Again it seemed to look upon him.

"If there is any person in the town, who feels emotion caused by this man's death," said Scrooge quite agonized, "show that person to me, Spirit, I beseech you!"

The Phantom spread its dark robe before him for 35 moment, like a wing; and withdrawing it, revealed a room by daylight, where a mother and her children were.

he was expecting some one, and with anxious eagerness; she walked up and down the room; started at every sound; looked out from the window; glanced at the clock; tried, but in vain, to work with her needle; and could hardly bear the voices of the children in their play. 5

At length the long-expected knock was heard. She hurried to the door, and met her husband; a man whose face was careworn and depressed, though he was young. There was a remarkable expression in it now; a kind of anxious delight of which he felt ashamed, and which he struggled to repress. 10

He sat down to the dinner that had been hoarding for days by the fire; and when she asked him faintly what news he had (which was not until after a long silence), he appeared embarrassed how to answer. 15

Is it good," she said, "or bad?"—to help him.

Bad," he answered.

We are quite ruined?"

No. There is hope yet, Caroline."

If he relents," she said, amazed, "there is! Nothing lost hope, if such a miracle has happened." 20

He is past relenting," said her husband. "He is past."

He was a mild and patient creature if her face spoke for him; but she was thankful in her soul to hear it, and she held so, with clasped hands. She prayed forgiveness the next moment, and was sorry; but the first was the emotion in her heart. 25

What the half-drunken woman whom I told you of last night, said to me, when I tried to see him and obtain a clerk's delay; and what I thought was a mere excuse to hide me; turns out to have been quite true. He was not very ill, but dying, then." 30

To whom will our debt be transferred?"

I don't know. But before that time we shall be ready to pay the money; and even though we were not, it would be 35

bad fortune indeed to find so merciless a creature's successor. We may sleep to-night with light hearts!"

Yes. Soften it as they would, their hearts were
5 The children's faces, hushed, and clustered round what they so little understood, were brighter; and the happier house for this man's death! The one on that the Ghost could show him, caused by the one of pleasure.

10 "Let me see some tenderness connected with said Scrooge; "or that dark chamber, Spirit, which just now, will be forever present to me."

The Ghost conducted him through several streets
15 and there to find himself, but nowhere was he. They entered poor Bob Cratchit's house; the one he had visited before; and found the mother and children seated round the fire.

Quiet. Very quiet. The noisy little Cratchits
20 still as statues in one corner, and sat looking up at who had a book before him. The mother and daughters were engaged in sewing. But surely they were quiet!

25 "And he took a child, and set him in the middle of them."

Where had Scrooge heard those words? He had dreamed them. The boy must have read them and the Spirit crossed the threshold. Why did he

The mother laid her work upon the table, and
30 hand up to her face.

"The colour hurts my eyes," she said.

The colour? Ah, poor Tiny Tim!

"They're better now again," said Cratchit's wife, "they makes them weak by candlelight; and I would
35 weak eyes to your father when he comes home.
' It must be near his time."

"Past it rather," Peter answered, shutting up his book. But I think he's walked a little slower than he used, these last evenings, mother."

They were very quiet again. At last she said, and in a ready cheerful voice, that only faltered once:—

"I have known him walk with—I have known him walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed."

"And so have I," cried Peter. "Often."

"And so have I," exclaimed another. So had all.

"But he was so very light to carry," she resumed, intent upon her work, "and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble—no trouble. And there is your father at the door!"

She hurried out to meet him; and little Bob in his comforter—he had need of it, poor fellow—came in. His tea was ready for him on the hob, and they all tried who should help him to it most. Then the two young Cratchits got upon his knees and laid, each child a little cheek, against his face, as if they said, "Don't mind it, father. Don't be grieved!"

Bob was very cheerful with them, and spoke pleasantly to all the family. He looked at the work upon the table, and praised the industry and speed of Mrs. Cratchit and the girls. They would be done long before Sunday he said.

"Sunday! You went to-day, then, Robert?" said his wife.

"Yes, my dear," returned Bob. "I wish you could have seen me. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you'll see it often. I promised him that I could walk there on a Sunday. My little, little child!" cried Bob. "My little child!"

He broke down all at once. He couldn't help it. If he could have helped it, he and his child would have been further apart perhaps than they were.

He left the room, and went up stairs into the room above,

which was lighted cheerfully, and hung with Christmas
There was a chair set close beside the child, and there
signs of some one having been there lately. Poor Bob
down in it, and when he had thought a little and com-
5 himself, he kissed the little face. He was reconciled
what had happened, and went down again quite hap-

They drew about the fire, and talked; the girl
mother working still. Bob told them of the extraordi-
kindness of Mr. Scrooge's nephew, whom he had so
10 seen but once, and who, meeting him in the street that
and seeing that he looked a little—"just a little down-
know," said Bob, inquired what had happened to dis-
him. "On which," said Bob, "for he is the pleasant
spoken gentleman you ever heard, I told him."
15 heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit," he said, "and he
sorry for your good wife." By the bye, how he ever
that, I don't know."

"Knew what, my dear?"

"Why, that you were a good wife," replied Bob.

20 "Everybody knows that!" said Peter.

"Very well observed, my boy!" cried Bob. "I hope
do. 'Heartily sorry,' he said, 'for your good wife.
can be of service to you in any way,' he said, giving me
card, 'that's where I live. Pray come to me.' Now
25 wasn't," cried Bob, "for the sake of anything he might
able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that that
quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known
Tiny Tim, and felt with us."

"I'm sure he's a good soul!" said Mrs. Cratchit.

30 "You would be surer of it, my dear," returned Bob.
you saw and spoke to him. I shouldn't be at all sur-
mark what I say, if he got Peter a better situation."

"Only hear that, Peter," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"And then," cried one of the girls, "Peter will be
35 *ing company* with some one, and setting up for himself
"*Get along with you!*" retorted Peter, grinning.

"It's just as likely as not," said Bob, "one of these days; though there's plenty of time for that, my dear. But however—and whenever we part from one another, I am sure shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim—shall we—or is first parting that there was among us?"

5

"Never, father!" cried they all.

"And I know," said Bob, "I know, my dears, that when I recollect how patient and how mild he was; although he was a little, little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it."

10

"No, never, father!" they all cried again.

"I am very happy," said little Bob, "I am very happy!"

Mrs. Cratchit kissed him, his daughters kissed him, the young Cratchits kissed him, and Peter and himself took hands. Spirit of Tiny Tim, thy childish essence is from God!

15

"Spectre," said Scrooge, "something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead?"

The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come conveyed him, as before—though at a different time, he thought: indeed, there seemed no order in these latter visions, save that they were in the Future—into the resorts of business men, but showed him not himself. Indeed, the Spirit did not stay for anything, but went straight on, as to the end just now desired, until besought by Scrooge to tarry for a moment.

25

"This court," said Scrooge, "through which we hurry now, is where my place of occupation is, and has been for a long time. I see the house. Let me behold what I shall be, in days to come!"

30

The Spirit stopped; the hand was pointed elsewhere.

"The house is yonder," Scrooge exclaimed. "Why do you point away?"

The inexorable finger underwent no change.

Scrooge hastened to the window of his office, and looked out. It was an office still, but not his. The furniture was

35

not the same, and the figure in the chair was not himself. The Phantom pointed as before.

He joined it once again, and wondering why and where he had gone, accompanied it until they reached an iron gate. He paused to look round before entering.

A churchyard. Here, then, the wretched man whose name he had now to learn, lay underneath the ground. It was a worthy place. Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation's death, not choked up with too much burying; fat with repleted appetite. A worthy place!

The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down to One. He advanced towards it trembling. The Phantom was exactly as it had been, but he dreaded that he saw new meaning in its solemn shape.

"Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point," said Scrooge, "answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?"

Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood.

"Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which if persevered in, they must lead," said Scrooge. "But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say is thus with what you show me!"

The Spirit was immovable as ever.

Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, EBENEZER SCROOGE.

"Am I that man who lay upon the bed?" he cried, upon his knees.

The finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again.

"No, Spirit! Oh, no, no!"

The finger still was there.

"Spirit!" he cried, tight clutching at its robe, "hear me!"

am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope!"

For the first time the hand appeared to shake.

"Good Spirit," he pursued, as down upon the ground he fell before it: "Your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life!"

The kind hand trembled.

"I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!"

In his agony, he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Spirit, stronger yet, repulsed him.

Holding up his hands in one last prayer to have his fate reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom's hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down to a bedpost.

STAVE FIVE

THE END OF IT

YES! and the bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!

"I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!" Scrooge repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. "The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Oh Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob, on my knees!"

He was so fluttered and so glowing with his good intentions, that his broken voice would scarcely answer to his call. He had been sobbing violently in his conflict with the Spirit, and his face was wet with tears.

"They are not torn down," cried Scrooge, folding one of his bed-curtains in his arms, "they are not torn down, ring and all. They are here: I am here: the shadows of the things that would have been, may be dispelled. They will be. I know they will!"

His hands were busy with his garments all this time, turning them inside out, putting them on upside down, tearing them, mislaying them, making them parties to every kind of extravagance.

"I don't know what to do!" cried Scrooge, laughing and crying in the same breath; and making a perfect Laocöon of himself with his stockings. "I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A Merry Christmas to everybody! A Happy New Year to all the world. Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!"

had frisked into the sitting room, and was now standing there; perfectly winded.

"Here's the saucepan that the gruel was in!" cried he, starting off again, and frisking round the fireplace. "Here's the door, by which the Ghost of Jacob Marley entered! There's the corner where the Ghost of Christmas Present sat! There's the window where I saw the evil Spirits! It's all right, it's all true, it all happens! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Naturally, for a man who had been out of practice for so many years, it was a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh. The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs! I don't know what day of the month it is!" said Scrooge. "I don't know how long I've been among the Spirits. I don't know anything. I'm quite a baby. Never mind. It doesn't matter. I'd rather be a baby. Hallo! Whoop! Here!"

He was checked in his transports by the churches ringing at the lustiest peals he had ever heard. Clash, clang, anvil, ding, dong, bell. Bell, dong, ding, hammer, clash! Oh, glorious, glorious!

Striding to the window, he opened it, and put out his

No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring, cold; piping for the blood to dance to; golden sunlight; only sky; sweet fresh air; merry bells. Oh, glorious. glorious!

"That's to-day?" cried Scrooge, calling downward to a Sunday clothes, who perhaps had loitered in to look at him.

"He?" returned the boy, with all his might of wonder.

"That's to-day, my fine fellow?" said Scrooge.

"To-day!" replied the boy. "Why, CHRISTMAS DAY."

"It's Christmas Day!" said Scrooge to himself. "I haven't missed it. The Spirits have done it all in one

They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can. Hallo, my fine fellow?"

"Hallo!" returned the boy.

"Do you know the Poulterer's, in the next street but one at the corner?" Scrooge inquired.

"I should hope I did," replied the lad.

5 "An intelligent boy!" said Scrooge. "A remarkable boy! Do you know whether they've sold the prize Turkey key that was hanging up there? Not the little prize Turkey key: the big one?"

"What, the one as big as me?" returned the boy.

10 "What a delightful boy!" said Scrooge. "It's a pleasure to talk to him. Yes, my buck!"

"It's hanging there now," replied the boy.

"Is it?" said Scrooge. "Go and buy it."

"Walk-ER!" exclaimed the boy.

15 "No, no," said Scrooge, "I am in earnest. Go and fetch it, and tell 'em to bring it here, that I may give them some direction where to take it. Come back with the man, I'll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes, and I'll give you half-a-crown!"

20 The boy was off like a shot. He must have had a steady hand at a trigger who could have got a shot off half so fast.

"I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's!" whispered Scrooge, rubbing his hands, and splitting with a laugh. "He shan't know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim. Joe Miller never made such a joke as sending it to Bob's will be

25 The hand in which he wrote the address was not a steady one, but write it he did, somehow, and went down stairs to open the street door, ready for the coming of the poulterer man. As he stood there, waiting his arrival, the knocking caught his eye.

30 "I shall love it, as long as I live!" cried Scrooge, patting it with his hand. "I scarcely ever looked at it before."

What an honest expression it has in its face! It's a wonderful knocker!—Here's the Turkey. Hallo! Who's there? You! Merry Christmas!"

Turkey! He could never have stood with

that bird. He would have snapped 'em short off in a minute, like sticks of sealing-wax.

Why, it's impossible to carry that to Camden Town," Scrooge. "You must have a cab."

he chuckle with which he said this, and the chuckle which he paid for the turkey, and the chuckle with which he paid for the cab, and the chuckle with which he recompensed the boy, were only to be exceeded by the chuckle with which he sat down breathless in his chair, and chuckled till he cried. 5

Shaving was not an easy task, for his hand continued to slip very much; and shaving requires attention, even when you don't dance while you are at it. But if he had cut the end of his nose off, he would have put a piece of stick-plaster over it, and been quite satisfied. 10

He dressed himself "all in his best," and at last got out into the streets. The people were by this time pouring in, as he had seen them with the Ghost of Christmas Present; and walking with his hands behind him, Scrooge regarded every one with a delighted smile. He looked so 15
incredibly pleasant, in a word, that three or four good-looking fellows said, "Good morning, Sir! A Merry Christmas to you!" And Scrooge said often afterwards, of all the blithe sounds he had ever heard, those were the blithest in his ears. 20

He had not gone far, when coming on towards him he met the portly gentleman, who had walked into his counting-house the day before and said, "Scrooge and I are old friends, I believe?" It sent a pang across his heart to think how this old gentleman would look upon him when 25
they met; but he knew what path lay straight before him, and he took it.

"My dear Sir," said Scrooge, quickening his pace, and catching the old gentleman by both his hands. "How do you do? I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of 30
you to call. A Merry Christmas to you, Sir!"

"Mr. Scrooge?"

"Yes," said Scrooge. "That is my name, and I may not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask you don. And will you have the goodness"—here S
5 whispered in his ear.

"Lord bless me!" cried the gentleman, as if his were gone. "My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?"

"If you please," said Mr. Scrooge. "Not a farthing. A great many back-payments are included in it, I
10 you. Will you do me that favour?"

"My dear Sir," said the other, shaking hands with "I don't know what to say to such munificence!"

"Don't say anything, please," retorted Scrooge. "and see me. Will you come and see me?"

15 "I will!" cried the old gentleman. And it was meant to do it.

"Thank'ee," said Scrooge. "I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you!"

He went to church, and walked about the street
20 watched the people hurrying to and fro, and children on the head, and questioned beggars, and down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows, and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed that any walk—that any
25 could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he turned his steps towards his nephew's house.

He passed the door a dozen times, before he had the courage to go up and knock. But he made a dash at it:—

30 "Is your master at home, my dear?" said Scrooge's girl. Nice girl! Very.

"Yes, Sir."

"Where is he, my love?" said Scrooge.

"He's in the dining-room, Sir, along with my
35 I'll show you up stairs, if you please."

"Thank'ee. He knows me," said Scrooge,

and already on the dining-room lock. "I'll go in here, dear."

He turned it gently, and sidled his face in round the door. They were looking at the table (which was spread out in array); for these young housekeepers are always 5
vicious on such points, and like to see that everything is at.

"Fred!" said Scrooge.

Dear heart alive, how his niece by marriage started! Scrooge had forgotten, for the moment, about her sitting 10
in the corner with the footstool, or he wouldn't have done on any account.

"Why, bless my soul!" cried Fred, "who's that?"

"It's I. Your uncle Scrooge. I have come to dinner. Will you let me in, Fred?" 15

"Let him in! It is a mercy he didn't shake his arm off."

"He was at home in five minutes. Nothing could be earlier. His niece looked just the same. So did Topper 20
when *he* came. So did the plump sister, when *she* came.

So did every one when *they* came. Wonderful party, 20
wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, won-der-ful happiness!

But he was early at the office next morning. Oh, he was early there. If he could only be there first, and catch Bob Cratchit coming late! That was the thing he 25
had set his heart upon.

And he did it; yes he did! The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was full eighteen 30
minutes and a half behind his time. Scrooge sat with his mouth wide open, that he might see him come into the Tank.

His hat was off, before he opened the door; his coat too. He was on his stool in a jiffy; driving away 30
with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o'clock.

"Hallo!" growled Scrooge, in his accustomed voice near as he could feign it. "What do you mean by 35
being here at this time of day?"

"I am very sorry, Sir," said Bob. *I am b time."*

"You are?" repeated Scrooge. "Yes. I t are. Step this way, Sir, if you please."

5 "It's only once a year, Sir," pleaded Bob, s from the Tank. "It shall not be repeated. I wa rather merry yesterday, Sir."

"Now, I'll tell you what, my friend," said "I am not going to stand this sort of thing an
10 And therefore," he continued, leaping from his s giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he back into the Tank again: "and therefore I s to raise your salary!"

Bob trembled, and got a little nearer to t
15 He had a momentary idea of knocking Scrooge d it; holding him; and calling to the people in the help and a strait waistcoat.

"A Merry Christmas, Bob!" said Scrooge, earnestness that could not be mistaken, as he cla
20 on the back. "A merrier Christmas, Bob, s fellow, than I have given you for many a year! your salary, and endeavour to assist your s family, and we will discuss your affairs this very a over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob
25 up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before another i, Bob Cratchit!"

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did no was a second father. He became as good a f
30 good a master, and as good a man, as the good knew, or any other good old city, town, or bo: the good old world. Some people laughed to alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and litt them; for he was wise enough to know that
35 ever happened on this globe, for good, at v

he did not have their fill of laughter in the outset; and knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have the malady in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for ⁵

He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. ¹⁰ That he truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tim observed, God Bless Us, Every One!

THE WEEK OF THE GOLDEN MARY

IN TEN CHAPTERS

CHAPTER I

THE WEEK

I was apprenticed to the Sea when I was twelve years old, and I have ever since had a great deal of rough weather with them, and menaphtical. It has always been my opinion, since I first possessed such a thing as an opinion, that the man who knows only one subject is next tiresome to the man who knows no subject. Therefore, in the course of my life I have taught myself whatever I could, and although I am not an educated man, I am able, I am thankful to say, to have an intelligent interest in most things.

A person might suppose, from reading the above, that I am in the habit of holding forth about number one. That is not the case. Just as if I was to come into a room among strangers, and must either be introduced or introduce myself, so I have taken the liberty of passing these few remarks, simply and plainly that it may be known who and what I am. I will add no more of the sort than that my name is William George Ravender, that I was born at Penrith half a year after my own father was drowned, and that I am on the second day of this present blessed Christmas week of one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, fifty-six years of age.

When the rumour first went flying up and down that there was gold in California—which, as most people know, was before it was discovered in the British colony of Australia—I was in the West Indies, trading among the

lands. Being in command and likewise part-owner of a tart schooner, I had my work cut out for me, and I was doing it. Consequently, gold in California was no business of mine.

But, by the time when I came home to England again, the thing was as clear as your hand held up before you at noon-day. There was Californian gold in the museums and in the goldsmiths' shops, and the very first time I went upon 'Change, I met a friend of mine (a seafaring man like myself), with a Californian nugget hanging to his watch-chain. I handled it. It was as like a peeled walnut with its unevenly broken off here and there, and then electrotyped all over, as ever I saw anything in my life.

I am a single man (she was too good for this world and for me, and she died six weeks before our marriage-day), so when I am ashore, I live in my house at Poplar. My house at Poplar is taken care of and kept ship-shape by an old lady who was my mother's maid before I was born. She is as handsome and as upright as any old lady in the world. She is as fond of me as if she had ever had an only son, and I was he. Well do I know wherever I sail that she never lays down her head at night without having said, "Merciful Lord! bless and preserve William George Ravender, and send him safe home, through Christ our Saviour!" I have thought of it in many a dangerous moment, when it has done me no harm, I am sure.

In my house at Poplar, along with this old lady, I lived quiet for best part of a year: having had a long spell of it among the Islands, and having (which was very uncommon in me) taken the fever rather badly. At last, being strong and hearty, and having read every book I could lay hold of, right out, I was walking down Leadenhall Street in the City of London, thinking of turning-to again, when I met what I call Smithick and Watersby of Liverpool. I chanced to lift up my eyes from looking in at a ship's

chronometer in a window, and I saw him bearing down upon me, head on.

It is, personally, neither Smithick, nor Watersby, that I here mention, nor was I ever acquainted with any man either of those names, nor do I think that there has been any one of either of those names in that Liverpool House for years back. But, it is in reality the House itself that I refer to; and a wiser merchant or a truer gentleman never stepped.

“My dear Captain Ravender,” says he. “Of all the men on earth, I wanted to see you most. I was on my way to you.”

“Well!” says I. “That looks as if you *were* to see me, don’t it?” With that I put my arm in his, and we walked on towards the Royal Exchange, and when we got there walked up and down at the back of it where the Clock Tower is. We walked an hour and more, for he had much to say to me. He had a scheme for chartering a new ship of their own to take out cargo to the diggers and emigrants in California, and to buy and bring back gold. Into the particulars of that scheme I will not enter, and I have no right to enter. All I say of it is, that it was a very original one, a very fine one, a very sound one, and a very lucrative one beyond doubt.

He imparted it to me as freely as if I had been a part of himself. After doing so, he made me the handsomest sharing offer that ever was made to me, boy or man—or I believe to any other captain in the Merchant Navy—and he took this round turn to finish with:

“Ravender, you are well aware that the lawlessness of that coast and country at present is as special as the circumstances in which it is placed. Crews of vessels outward bound desert as soon as they make the land; crews of vessels homeward-bound, ship at enormous wages, with the express intention of murdering the captain and seizing the gold freight; no man can trust another, and the de-

let loose. Now," says he, "you know my opinion of and you know I am only expressing it, and with no variety, when I tell you that you are almost the only one whose integrity, discretion, and energy—" &c., &c. I don't want to repeat what he said, though I was and sensible of it.

Notwithstanding my being, as I have mentioned, quite for a voyage, still I had some doubts of this voyage. I knew, without being told, that there were many difficulties and dangers in it, a long way over and those which attend all voyages. It must not be supposed that I was afraid to face them; but, in my opinion a man has no manly motive or sustainment in his own breast in facing dangers, unless he has well considered what they are and is quietly able to say to himself, "None of these can now take me by surprise; I shall know what to do in the best in any of them; all the rest lies in the higher and greater hands to which I humbly commit myself." On this principle I have so attentively considered (regarding my duty) all the hazards I have ever been able to think of in the ordinary way of storm, shipwreck, and fire at sea, I hope I should be prepared to do, in any of those cases which ever could be done, to save the lives entrusted to my charge.

As I was thoughtful, my good friend proposed that he would leave me to walk there as long as I liked, and that I should dine with him by-and-bye at his club in Pall Mall. I accepted the invitation and I walked up and down there, in a quarter-deck fashion, a matter of a couple of hours; now and then looking up at the weathercock as I might have done when I was up aloft; and now and then taking a look into Cornhill as I might have taken a look over the side.

All dinner-time, and all after dinner-time, we talked it over again. I gave him my views of his plan, and he very much approved of the same. I told him I had nearly decided, but not quite. "Well, well," says he, "come down

to Liverpool to-morrow with me, and see the Mary." I liked the name (her name was Mary, & was golden, if golden stands for good), so I began that it was almost done when I said I would go to
5 pool. On the next morning, but one we were on the Golden Mary. I might have known, from his me to come down and see her, what she was. I her to have been the completest and most exquisite that ever I set my eyes upon.

10 We had inspected every timber in her, and ha back to the gangway to go ashore from the dock when I put out my hand to my friend. "Touch up says I, " and touch heartily. I take command of t and I am hers and yours, if I can get John Ste
15 for my chief mate."

John Steadiman had sailed with me four voyages first voyage John was third mate out to China, an home second. The other three voyages he was r officer. At this time of chartering the Golden M
20 was aged thirty-two. A brisk, bright, blue-eyed f very neat figure and rather under the middle size out of the way and never in it, a face that pleased eve and that all children took to, a habit of going aboi ing as cheerily as a blackbird, and a perfect sailor.

25 We were in one of those Liverpool hackney-coa less than a minute, and we cruised about in her upw three hours, looking for John. John had come hon Van Diemen's Land barely a month before, and heard of him as taking a frisk in Liverpool. We
30 after him, among many other places at the two bo houses he was fondest of, and we found he had had a spell at each of them; but, he had gone here and gon and had set off "to lay out on the main-to'-gallant; *the highest* Welsh mountain" (so he had told the pe
35 *the house*), and where he might be then, or when t
re back nobody could tell us. But it was surr

to see how every face brightened the moment there
mention made of the name of Mr. Steadiman.
were taken aback at meeting with no better luck, and
wore ship and put her head for my friends, when as
e jogging through the streets, I clap my eyes on 5
himself coming out of a toy-shop! He was carry-
little boy, and conducting two uncommon pretty
to their coach, and he told me afterwards that he
ver in his life seen one of the three before, but that
so taken with them on looking in at the toy-shop 10
they were buying the child a cranky Noah's Ark,
uch down by the head, that he had gone in and
the ladies' permission to treat him to a tolerably
Cutter there was in the window, in order that such
some boy might not grow up with a lubberly idea of 15
rchitecture.

stood off and on until the ladies' coachman began to
y, and then we hailed John. On his coming aboard
I told him, very gravely, what I had said to my
It struck him, as he said himself, amidships. He 20
ite shaken by it. "Captain Ravender," were John
an's words, "such an opinion from you is true
ndation, and I'll sail round the world with you
nty years if you hoist the signal, and stand by you
!" And now indeed I felt that it was done, and 25
Golden Mary was afloat.

s never grew yet under the feet of Smithick and
by. The riggers were out of that ship in a fort-
time, and we had begun taking in cargo. John
ays aboard, seeing everything stowed with his own 30
nd whenever I went aboard myself early or late,
r he was below in the hold, or on deck at the hatch-
overhauling his cabin, nailing up pictures in it of
sh *Roses of England*, the *Blue Belles of Scotland*,
female *Shamrock of Ireland*: of a certainty I 35
hn singing like a blackbird.

We had from the twenty passengers. Our sailing
 arrangement was no sooner out than we might have
 these twenty times over. In entering our men, I
 John took together looked them, and we entered
 5 our good hands—as good as were to be found in that
 And so in a good ship of the best build, well o
 well arranged, well equipped, well manned, well fou
 all respects, we parted with our flag at a quarter pas
 o'clock in the afternoon of the seventh of March
 10 thousand eight hundred and fifty-one, and stood v
 fair wind out to sea.

It may be easily believed that up to that time I ha
 no desire to be intimate with my passengers. The
 of them were then in their berth seasick; howev
 15 going among them, telling them what was good for
 persuading them not to be there, but to come up on
 and feel the breeze, and in rousing them with a jok
 comfortable word, I made acquaintance with them
 later, in a more friendly and confidential way fro
 20 first, than I might have done at the cabin table.

Of my passengers, I need only particularize, j
 present, a bright-eyed blooming young wife who was
 out to join her husband in California, taking wit
 their only child, a little girl of three years old, wh
 25 had never seen; a sedate young woman in black, son
 years older (about thirty as I should say), who was
 out to join a brother; and an old gentleman, a goo
 like a hawk if his eyes had been better and not so rec
 was always talking, morning, noon, and night, abo
 30 gold discovery. But, whether he was making the v
 thinking his old arms could dig for gold, or wheth
 speculation was to buy it, or to barter for it, or to ch
 it, or to snatch it anyhow from other people, wa
 secret. He kept his secret.
 35 These three and the child were the soonest well
 child was a most engaging child, to be sure, s

of me: though I am bound to admit that John Stead-
 and I were borne on her pretty little books in reverse
 , and that he was captain there, and I was mate. It
 beautiful to watch her with John, and it was beautiful
 atch John with her. Few would have thought it 5
 ble, to see John playing at Bo-peep round the mast,
 he was the man who had caught up an iron bar and
 a Malay and a Maltese dead, as they were gliding
 their knives down the cabin stair aboard the barque
 England, when the captain lay ill in his cot, off Sauger 10

But he was; and give him his back against a bul-
 he would have done the same by half a dozen of
 The name of the young mother was Mrs. Ather-
 the name of the young lady in black was Miss Cole-
 , and the name of the old gentleman was Mr. Rarx. 15
 the child had a quantity of shining fair hair, cluster-
 curls all around her face, and as her name was Lucy,
 iman gave her the name of Golden Lucy. So, we
 he Golden Lucy and the Golden Mary; and John
 up the idea to that extent as he and the child went 20
 ng about the decks, that I believe she used to think
 ip was alive somehow—a sister or companion, going
 e same place as herself. She liked to be by the wheel,
 n fine weather, I have often stood by the man whose
 it was at the wheel, only to hear her, sitting near my 25
 talking to the ship. Never had a child such a doll
 e, I suppose; but she made a doll of the Golden Mary,
 used to dress her up by tying ribbons and little bits of
 to the belaying pins; and nobody ever moved them,
 s it was to save them from being blown away. 30

course I took charge of the two young women, and
 ed them "my dear," and they never minded, knowing
 whatever I said was said in a fatherly and protecting
 . I gave *them* their places on each side of me at
 , Mrs. Atherfield on my right and Miss Coleshaw 35
 left; and I directed the unmarried lady to serve

out the breakfast, and the married lady to set tea. Likewise I said to my black steward in
ence, "Tom Snow, these two ladies are equal
tresses of this house, and do you obey their order
5 at which Tom laughed, and they all laughed.

Old Mr. Rarx was not a pleasant man to look
to talk to, or to be with, for no one could help
he was a sordid and selfish character, and twisted
warped further and further out of the straight
10 Not but what he was on his best behaviour
everybody was; for we had no bickering among
or aft. I only mean to say, he was not the man
have chosen for a messmate. If choice there had
might even have gone a few points out of one
15 say, "No! Not him!" But, there was one con-
sistency in Mr. Rarx. That was, that he took
ishing interest in the child. He looked, and
he was, one of the last of men to care at all for
care much for any human creature. Still, he
20 as to be habitually uneasy, if the child was lost
out of his sight. He was always afraid of her falling
board, or falling down a hatchway, or of a block
not coming down upon her from the rigging in
ing of the ship, or of her getting some hurt or
25 used to look at her and touch her, as if she was
precious to him. He was always solicitous about
injuring her health, and constantly entreated
to be careful of it. This was so much the matter
because the child did not like him, but used to
30 from him, and would not even put out her hand
without coaxing from others. I believe that
on board frequently noticed this, and not one could
stood it. However, it was such a plain fact,
Adiman said more than once when old Mr.
ithin earshot, that if the Golden Mary

ess for the dear old gentleman she carried in her lap, he must be bitterly jealous of the Golden Lucy.

Before I go any further with this narrative, I will state that our ship was a barque of three hundred tons, carrying a crew of eighteen men, a second mate in addition to John, a carpenter, an armourer or smith, and two apprentices (one a Scotch boy, poor little fellow). We had three boats; the Long-boat, capable of carrying twenty-five men; the Cutter, capable of carrying fifteen; and the Surf-boat, capable of carrying ten. I put down the capacity of these boats according to the numbers they were really meant to hold.

We had tastes of bad weather and head-winds, of course; but, on the whole, we had as fine a run as any reasonable man could expect, for sixty days. I then began to enter two remarks in the ship's Log and in my Journal; first, that there was an unusual and amazing quantity of ice; second, that the nights were most wonderfully dark in spite of the ice.

For five days and a half, it seemed quite useless and hopeless to alter the ship's course so as to stand out of the way of this ice. I made what southing I could; but, all that time, we were beset by it. Mrs. Atherfield after standing by me on deck once, looking for some time in an awed manner at the great bergs that surrounded us, said in a whisper, "O! Captain Ravender, it looks as if the whole solid earth had changed into ice, and broken up!" I said to her, laughing, "I don't wonder that it does, to your inexperienced eyes, my dear." But I had never seen a twentieth part of the quantity, and, in reality, I was pretty much of her opinion.

However, at two P. M. on the afternoon of the sixth day, that is to say, when we were sixty-six days out, John Steadiman, who had gone aloft, sang out from the top, that the sea was clear ahead. Before four P. M. a strong breeze springing up right astern, we were in open water

at sunset. The breeze then freshening into half a gale, the wind, and the Golden Mary being a very fast sailer, went before the wind merrily, all night.

I had thought it impossible that it could be darker than it had been, until the sun, moon, and stars should fall out of the Heavens, and Time should be destroyed; but, it had been next to light, in comparison with what it was now. The darkness was so profound, that looking in it was painful and oppressive—like looking, without a ray of light, into a dense black bandage put as close before the eyes as it could be, without touching them. I doubled the lookout, and John and I stood in the bow side-by-side, never leaving it all night. Yet I should no more have known that he was near me when he was silent than without putting out my arm and touching him, than I should if he had turned in and been fast asleep below. We were not so much looking out, all of us, as listening to the utmost, both with our eyes and ears.

Next day, I found that the mercury in the barometer which had risen steadily since we cleared the ice, remained steady. I had had very good observations, with now and then the interruption of a day or so, since our departure. I got the sun at noon, and found that we were in Lat. 58° S., Long. 60° W., off New South Shetland; in the neighborhood of Cape Horn. We were sixty-seven days out, that day. The ship's reckoning was accurately worked and made up. The ship did her duty admirably, all on board were well, and all hands were as smart, efficient, and contented as it was possible to be.

When the night came on again as dark as before, it was the eighth night I had been on deck. Nor had I taken more than a very little sleep in the day-time, my station being always near the helm, and often at it, while we were among the ice. Few but those who have tried it can imagine the difficulty and pain of only keeping the eyes open—physically open—under such circumstances,

darkness. They get struck by the darkness, and led by the darkness. They make patterns in it, and flash in it, as if they had gone out of your head to at you. On the turn of midnight, John Steadiman, was alert and fresh (for I had always made him turn 5 y day), said to me, "Captain Ravender, I entreat of to go below. I am sure you can hardly stand, and voice is getting weak, sir. Go below, and take a rest. I'll call you if a block chafes." I said to in answer, "Well, well, John! Let us wait till the 10 of one o'clock, before we talk about that." I had had one of the ship's lanterns held up, that I might see the night went by my watch, and it was then twenty minutes after twelve.

At five minutes before one, John sang out to the boy to 15 g the lantern again, and when I told him once more at the time was, entreated and prayed of me to go be-

"Captain Ravender," says he, "all's well; we can't d to have you laid up for a single hour; and I respect- and earnestly beg of you to go below." The end of it 20 that I agreed to do so, on the understanding that if

led to come up of my own accord within three hours, as to be punctually called. Having settled that, I left in charge. But I called him to me once afterwards, 25 sk him a question. I had been to look at the barom-

and had seen the mercury still perfectly steady, and come up the companion again to take a last look at me—if I can use such a word in reference to such 30 nness—when I thought that the waves, as the Golden

y parted them and shook them off, had a hollow 30 d in them; something that I fancied was a rather

sual reverberation. I was standing by the quarter- rail on the starboard side, when I called John aft to and bade him listen. He did so with the greatest

attention. Turning to me he then said, "Rely upon it, 35 ain Ravender, you have been without rest too long,

and the novelty is only in the state of your sense of hearing. I thought so too by that time, and I think so now, though I can never know for absolute certain in this world whether it was or not.

- 5 When I left John Steadiman in charge, the ship was still going at a great rate through the water. The wind still blew right astern. Though she was making great way, she was under shortened sail, and had no more than she could easily carry. All was snug, and nothing complained.
- 10 There was a pretty sea running, but not a high sea neither, nor at all a confused one.

- I turned in, as we seamen say, all standing. The meaning of that is, I did not pull my clothes off—no, not even so much as my coat: though I did my shoes, for my
- 15 feet were badly swelled with the deck. There was a little swing-lamp alight in my cabin. I thought, as I looked at it before shutting my eyes, that I was so tired of darkness and troubled by darkness, that I could have gone to sleep best in the midst of a million of flaming gas-lights. That
- 20 was the last thought I had before I went off, except the prevailing thought that I should not be able to get to sleep at all.

- I dreamed that I was back at Penrith again, and was trying to get round the church, which had altered in
- 25 shape very much since I last saw it, and was cloven down the middle of the steeple in a most singular manner. Why I wanted to get round the church I don't know; but I was as anxious to do it as if my life depended on it. Indeed, I believe it did in the dream. For all that,
- 30 I could not get round the church. I was still trying, when I came against it with a violent shock, and was flung out of my cot against the ship's side. Shrieks and a terrible outcry struck me far harder than the bruising timber, and amidst sounds of grinding and crashing, and a heavy
- 35 rushing and breaking of water—sounds I understood too well—I made my way on deck. It was not an easy thing

for the ship heeled over frightfully, and was beating
urious manner.

ould not see the men as I went forward, but I could
hat they were hauling in sail, in disorder. I had my
et in my hand, and, after directing and encouraging 5
in this till it was done, I hailed first John Steadiman,
hen my second mate, Mr. William Rames. Both
ered clearly and steadily. Now, I had practised
and all my crew, as I have ever made it a custom to
se all who sail with me, to take certain stations and 10
my orders, in case of any unexpected crisis. When
oice was heard hailing, and their voices were heard
ring, I was aware, through all the noises of the ship
ea, and all the crying of the passengers below, that
was a pause. "Are you ready, Rames?"—"Ay, 15
!"—"Then light up, for God's sake!" In a moment
d another were burning blue-lights, and the ship and
board seemed to be enclosed in a mist of light, under
at black dome.

e light shone up so high that I could see the huge 20
rg upon which we had struck, cloven at the top and
the middle, exactly like Penrith Church in my dream.
e same moment I could see the watch last relieved
ling up and down on deck; I could see Mrs. Ather-
und Miss Coleshaw thrown about on the top of the 25
anion as they struggled to bring the child up from
; I could see that the masts were going with the
and the beating of the ship; I could see the fright-
each stove in on the starboard side, half the length
vessel, and the sheathing and timbers spirting up; 30
ld see that the Cutter was disabled, in a wreck of
n fragments; and I could see every eye turned upon
It is my belief that if there had been ten thousand
here, I should have seen them all, with their different

*And all this in a moment. But you must consider 35
moment.*

I saw the men, as they looked at me, fall towards their appointed stations, like good men and true. If she had not righted, they could have done very little there or anywhere but die—not that it is little for a man to die at his post—I mean they could have done nothing to save the passengers and themselves. Happily, however, the violence of the shock with which we had so determinedly borne down direct on that fatal Iceberg, as if it had been our destination instead of our destruction, had so smashed and pounded the ship that she got off in this same instant and righted. I did not want the carpenter to tell me she was filling and going down; I could see and hear that. I gave Rames the word to lower the Long-boat and the Surf-boat, and I myself told off the men for each duty. Not one hung back, or came before the other. I now whispered to John Steadiman, "John, I stand at the gangway here, to see every soul on board safe over the side. You shall have the next post of honour, and shall be the last but one to leave the ship. Bring up the passengers, and range them behind me; and put what provision and water you can get at, in the boats. Cast your eye for'ard, John, and you'll see you have not a moment to lose."

My noble fellows got the boats over the side as orderly as I ever saw boats lowered with any sea running, and when they were launched, two or three of the nearest men in them as they held on, rising and falling with the swell, called out, looking up at me, "Captain Ravender, if anything goes wrong with us, and you are saved, remember we stood by you!"—"We'll all stand by one another ashore, yet, please God, my lads!" says I. "Hold on bravely, and be tender with the women."

The women were an example to us. They trembled very much, but they were quiet and perfectly collected. "Kiss me, Captain Ravender," says Mrs. Atherton. "God in heaven bless you, you good man!" "My

r," says I, "those words are better for me than a boat." I held her child in my arms till she was in the t, and then kissed the child and handed her safe down. ow said to the people in her, "You have got your ght, my lads, all but me, and I am not coming yet 5 ile. Pull away from the ship, and keep off!"

That was the Long-boat. Old Mr. Rarx was one of her pplement, and he was the only passenger who had tly misbehaved since the ship struck. Others had a little wild, which was not to be wondered at, and 10 vvery blamable; but, he had made a lamentation and ar which it was dangerous for the people to hear, here is always contagion in weakness and selfishness. incessant cry had been that he must not be separated the child, that he couldn't see the child, and that 15 and the child must go together. He had even tried to the child out of my arms, that he might keep her is. "Mr. Rarx," said I to him when it came to that, ave a loaded pistol in my pocket; and if you don't d out of the gangway, and keep perfectly quiet, I 20 shoot you through the heart, if you have got one." he, "You won't do murder, Captain Ravender!" s, sir," says I, "I won't murder forty-four people to our you, but I'll shoot you to save them." After that as quiet, and stood shivering a little way off, until I 25 ed him to go over the side.

he Long-boat being cast off, the Surf-boat was soon l. There only remained aboard the Golden Mary, a Mullion, the man who had kept on burning the -lights (and who had lighted every new one at every 30 ne before it went out, as quietly as if he had been at an ination); John Steadiman; and myself. I hurried e two into the Surf-boat, called to them to keep off, waited with a grateful and relieved heart for the Long- to come and take me in, if she could. I looked at my 35 h, and it showed me, by the blue-light, ten minutes

past two. They lost no time. As soon as she was
 enough, I swung myself into her, and called to her
 "With a will, lads! She's reeling!" We were
 inch too far out of the inner vortex of her going
 5 when, by the blue-light which John Mullion still
 the bow of the Surf-boat, we saw her lurch, and
 to the bottom head-foremost. The child cried,
 wildly, "O the dear Golden Mary! O look at her
 her! Save the poor Golden Mary!" And then she
 10 burnt out, and the black dome seemed to come
 upon us.

I suppose if we had all stood atop of a mountain
 seen the whole remainder of the world sink away
 under us, we could hardly have felt more shocked
 15 solitary than we did when we knew we were alone
 wide ocean, and that the beautiful ship in which
 us had been securely asleep within half an hour
 for ever. There was an awful silence in our boat
 such a kind of palsy on the rowers and the main
 20 rudder, that I felt they were scarcely keeping her
 the sea. I spoke out then, and said, "Let every one
 thank the Lord for our preservation!" All then
 answered (even the child's), "We thank the Lord."
 I then said the Lord's Prayer, and all hands said
 25 me with a solemn murmuring. Then I gave them
 "Cheerily, O men, Cheerily!" and I felt that they
 handling the boat again as a boat ought to be handled.

The Surf-boat now burnt another blue-light to
 where they were, and we made for her, and laid on
 30 as nearly alongside of her as we dared. I had
 kept my boats with a coil or two of good stout stuff
 of them, so both boats had a rope at hand. We
 shifted, with much labour and trouble, to get near
 one another to divide the blue-lights (they were
 that night, for the sea-water soon got at them)
 a tow-rope out between us. All night long

gether, sometimes obliged to cast off the rope, and sometimes getting it out again, and all of us wearying the morning—which appeared so long in coming that Mr. Rarx screamed out, in spite of his fears of me, "The world is drawing to an end, and the sun will never
be any more!"

When the day broke, I found that we were all huddled together in a miserable manner. We were deep in the water; being, as I found on mustering, thirty-one in number, or at least six too many. In the Surf-boat they were fourteen in number, being at least four too many. The first thing I did, was to get myself passed to the rudder—which I took from that time—and to get Mrs. Herfield, her child, and Miss Coleshaw, passed on to me. As to old Mr. Rarx, I put him in the bow, as far from us as I could. And I put some of the best men near us in order that if I should drop there might a skilful hand ready to take the helm.

The sea moderating as the sun came up, though the sky was cloudy and wild, we spoke the other boat, to know what stores they had, and to overhaul what we had. I had a compass in my pocket, a small telescope, a double-barrelled pistol, a knife, and a fire-box and matches. Most of my men had knives, and some had a little tobacco: one, a pipe as well. We had a mug among us, and an spoon. As to provisions, there were in my boat two bags of biscuit, one piece of raw beef, one piece of raw pork, a bag of coffee, roasted but not ground (thrown in, I imagine, by mistake, for something else), two small casks of water, and about half a gallon of rum in a keg. The Surf-boat, having rather more rum than we, and fewer to drink it, gave us, as I estimated, another quart into our cask. In return, we gave them three double handfuls of rum, tied up in a piece of a handkerchief; they reported that they had aboard besides, a bag of biscuit, a piece of a small cask of water, a small box of lemons, and a

Dutch cheese. It took a long time to make changes, and they were not made without risk parties; the sea running quite high enough to be approaching near to one another very hazardously. With the bundle with the coffee, I conveyed to John S (who had a ship's compass with him), a paper pencil, and torn from my pocket-book, containing the course I meant to steer, in the hope of making being picked up by some vessel—I say in the hope. I had little hope of either deliverance. I then said to him, so as all might hear, that if we two be alive or die together, we would; but, that if we parted by the weather, and join company no more, we should have our prayers and blessings, and we theirs. We then gave them three cheers, which were turned, and I saw the men's heads droop in both directions. They fell to their oars again.

These arrangements had occupied the general attention advantageously for all, though (as I expressed in my sentence) they ended in a sorrowful feeling. In a few words to my fellow-voyagers on the subject of the small stock of food on which our lives depended, and on which we were preserved from the great deep, and on the necessity of our eking it out in the most frugal manner. One and all replied that whatever allowance was best to lay down should be strictly kept to. I gave a pair of scales out of a thin scrap of iron-plating, and twine, and I got together for weights such of the buttons among us as I calculated made up some over two ounces. This was the allowance of food served out once a day to each, from that time to that with the addition of a coffee-berry, or sometimes one, when the weather was very fair, for breakfast, and *nothing* else whatever, but half a pint of rum *each day*, and sometimes, when we were content, a teaspoonful of rum each, served out

know how learnedly it can be shown that rum is poison, but I also know that in this case, as in all similar cases I have ever read of—which are numerous—no words can express the comfort and support derived from it. Nor have I the least doubt that it saved the lives of far more than half our number. Having mentioned half a pint of water as our daily allowance, I ought to observe that sometimes we had less, and sometimes we had more; or much rain fell, and we caught it in a canvas stretched for the purpose.

Thus, at that tempestuous time of the year, and in that tempestuous part of the world, we shipwrecked people rose and fell with the waves. It is not my intention to relate (if I can avoid it) such circumstances appertaining to our doleful condition as have been better told in many other narratives of the kind than I can be expected to tell them. I will only note, in so many passing words, that day after day and night after night, we received the sea upon our backs to prevent it from swamping the boat; that one party was always kept baling, and that every hat and cap among us soon got worn out, though patched up many times, as the only vessels we had for that service; that another party lay down in the bottom of the boat, while a third rowed; and that we were soon all in boils and risters and rags.

The other boat was a source of such anxious interest to all of us that I used to wonder whether, if we were saved, the time could ever come when the survivors in this boat could be at all indifferent to the fortunes of the survivors in that. We got out a tow-rope whenever the weather permitted, but that did not often happen, and how the two parties kept within the same horizon, as we did, Heaven mercifully permitted it to be so for our consolation, I only know. I never shall forget the looks with which, when the morning light came, we used to gaze about us for the stormy waters, for the other boat. We once

parted company for seventy-two hours, and w
 them to have gone down, as they did us. T
 both sides when we came within view of one anot
 had something in a manner Divine in it; each w
 5 getful of individual suffering, in tears of delight
 pathy for the people in the other boat.

I have been wanting to get round to the ind
 personal part of my subject, as I call it, and the
 incident puts me in the right way. The pat
 10 good disposition aboard of us, was wonderful.
 surprised by it in the women; for all men born
 know what great qualities they will show when
 but, I own I was a little surprised by it in some o
 Among one-and-thirty people assembled at th
 15 times, there will usually, I should say, be two or
 certain tempers. I knew that I had more than
 temper with me among my own people, for I h
 those for the Long-boat that I might have them
 eye. But, they softened under their misery, an
 20 considerate of the ladies, and as compassionate o
 as the best among us, or among men—they coul
 been more so. I heard scarcely any complain
 party lying down would moan a good deal in t
 and I would often notice a man—not always
 25 man, it is to be understood, but nearly all of th
 time or other—sitting moaning at his oar, or in
 as he looked mistily over the sea. When it happ
 long before I could catch his eye, he would go o
 all the time in the dismalest manner; but when
 30 met, he would brighten and leave off. I alm
 got the impression that he did not know w
 he had been making, but that he thought he
 humming a tune.

Our sufferings from cold and wet were far gr
 35 *our sufferings from hunger. We managed*
ld warm; but, I doubt if any one else an

warm for five minutes together; and the shivering, and chattering of teeth, were sad to hear. The child cried at first for her lost playfellow, the Golden Mary; but she never whimpered afterwards; and when the state of weather made it possible, she used now and then to be taken up in the arms of some of us, to look over the sea for a Steadiman's boat. I see the golden hair and the sweet face now, between me and the driving clouds, an angel going to fly away.

It happened on the second day, towards night, that Atherfield, in getting little Lucy to sleep, sang her a hymn. She had a soft, melodious voice, and when she had finished it, our people up and begged for another. She sang them another, and after it had fallen dark ended with Evening Hymn. From that time, whenever anything could be heard above the sea and wind, and while she had voice left, nothing would serve the people but that she should sing at sunset. She always did, and always ended with the Evening Hymn. We mostly took up the last verse, and shed tears when it was done, but not miserably. It had a prayer night and morning, also, when the weather varied of it.

For twelve nights and eleven days we had been driving in our boat, when old Mr. Rarx began to be delirious, and to come out to me to throw the gold overboard or it would sink and we should all be lost. For days past the child had been declining, and that was the great cause of his wildness. He had been over and over again shrieking out to give her all the remaining meat, to give her all the remaining rum, to save her at any cost, or we should all be dead. At this time, she lay in her mother's arms at my feet.

One of her little hands was almost always creeping up to her mother's neck or chin. I had watched the wasting of the little hand, and I knew it was nearly over. The old man's cries were so discordant with the mother's submission, that I called out to him in an angry

voice, unless he held his peace on the instant, I would
him to be knocked on the head and thrown overboard.
He was mute then, until the child died, very peacefully
hour afterwards: which was known to all in the boat by
5 mother's breaking out into lamentations for the first
since the wreck—for, she had great fortitude and
stancy, though she was a little gentle woman. Old
Rarx then became quite ungovernable, tearing what
he had on him, raging in imprecations, and calling t
10 that if I had thrown the gold overboard (always the
with him!) I might have saved the child. "And r
says he, in a terrible voice, "we shall founder, and all
the Devil, for our sins will sink us, when we have no
cent child to bear us up!" We so discovered with a
15 ment, that this old wretch had only cared for the life
pretty little creature dear to all of us, because of th
fluence he superstitiously hoped she might have in pr
ing him! Altogether it was too much for the smi
armourer, who was sitting next the old man, to bear.
20 took him by the throat and rolled him under the th
where he lay still enough for hours afterwards.

All that thirteenth night, Miss Coleshaw, lying acro
knees as I kept the helm, comforted and supporte
poor mother. Her child, covered with a pea-jack
25 mine, lay in her lap. It troubled me all night to thin
there was no Prayer-Book among us, and that I
remember but very few of the exact words of the buri
vice. When I stood up at broad day, all knew wh
going to be done, and I noticed that my poor fellows
30 the motion of uncovering their heads, though their
had been stark bare to the sky and sea for many a
hour. There was a long heavy swell on, but other
was a fair morning, and there were broad fields of su
on the waves in the east. I said no more than thi
" *am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord*
'ised the daughter of Jairus the ruler, and said

I but slept. He raised the widow's son. He himself, and was seen of many. He loved little saying, Suffer them to come unto Me and rebuke it, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. In his many friends, and committed to His merciful good- 5
With those words I laid my rough face softly on my little forehead, and buried the Golden Lucy in the bosom of the Golden Mary.

I had it on my mind to relate the end of this dear world, I have omitted something from its exact place, 10
which will supply here. It will come quite as well here as anywhere else.

Thinking that if the boat lived through the stormy time must come, and soon come, when we have absolutely no morsel to eat, I had one mo- 15
ment often in my thoughts. Although I had, before that, fully satisfied myself that the instances of human beings in the last distress have fed upon their own flesh, are exceedingly few, and have very seldom (if ever) occurred when the people in distress, how- 20
ever dreadful their extremity, have been accustomed to endure with forbearance and restraint; I say, though I had before quite satisfied my mind on this topic, I felt

whether there might not have been in former times some harm and danger from keeping it out of sight 25
ending not to think of it. I felt doubtful whether my mind, growing weak with fasting and exposure and such a terrific idea to dwell upon in secret, might not have been a very natural thing. I felt that it was not a new thought of mine, for it had grown 30

very strong by reading. However, it came over me stronger and ever done before—as it had reason for doing—
that, and on the fourth day I decided that I would let it all go into the light that unformed fear which must dwell in more or less darkly in every brain among us. 35
It was as a means of beguiling the time and inspiring

hope. I gave them the best summary in my power of Bligh's voyage of more than three thousand miles, in an open boat after the Mutiny of the Bounty, and of the wonderful preservation of that boat's crew. They listened throughout with great interest, and I concluded by telling them, that in my opinion, the happiest circumstance in the whole narrative was, that Bligh, who was no delicate man, either had solemnly placed it on record therein that he was so, and certain that under no conceivable circumstances whatever would that emaciated party, who had gone through all the pains of famine, have preyed on one another. I cannot describe the visible relief which it spread through the boat, and how the tears stood in every eye. From that time I was as well convinced as Bligh himself that there was no danger, and that this phantom any rate, did not haunt us.

Now, it was a part of Bligh's experience that when people in his boat were most cast down, nothing did them so much good as hearing a story told by one of their number. When I mentioned that, I saw that it struck the general attention as much as it did my own, for I had not thought of it until I came to it in my summary. This was one day after Mrs. Atherfield first sang to us. I proposed that whenever the weather would permit, we should have a story two hours after dinner (I always issued the allowance I had mentioned at one o'clock, and called it by that name) as well as our song at sunset. The proposal was received with a cheerful satisfaction that warmed my heart with me; and I do not say too much when I say that those periods in the four-and-twenty hours were expected with positive pleasure, and were really enjoyed by all hands. Spectres as we soon were, in our bodily wasting, our imaginations did not perish like the gross flesh upon our bones. Music and Adventure, two of the great gifts of Providence to mankind, could charm us long after that was lost.

The wind was almost always against us after the

y; and for many days together we could not nearly hold
r own. We had all varieties of bad weather. We had
in, hail, snow, wind, mist, thunder, and lightning. Still
e boats lived through the heavy seas, and still we perish-
g people rose and fell with the great waves. 5

Sixteen nights and fifteen days, twenty nights and nine-
en days, twenty-four nights and twenty-three days. So
e time went on. Disheartening as I knew that our
ogress, or want of progress, must be, I never deceived
em as to my calculations of it. In the first place, I felt 10
at we were all too near eternity for deceit; in the second
ace, I knew that if I failed, or died, the man who followed
e must have a knowledge of the true state of things to
gin upon. When I told them at noon, what I reckoned
e had made or lost, they generally received what I said 15
a tranquil and resigned manner, and always gratefully
wards me. It was not unusual at any time of the day for
me one to burst out weeping loudly without any new
use; and, when the burst was over, to calm down a little
tter than before. I had seen exactly the same thing in a 20
use of mourning.

During the whole of this time, old Mr. Rarx had had his
s of calling out to me to throw the gold (always the gold!)
erboard, and of heaping violent reproaches upon me for
t having saved the child; but now, the food being all gone, 25
d I having nothing left to serve out but a bit of coffee-
rry now and then, he began to be too weak to do this, and
nsequently fell silent. Mrs. Atherfield and Miss Cole-
aw generally lay, each with an arm across one of my
ees and her head upon it. They never complained at 30
l. Up to the time of her child's death, Mrs. Atherfield
d bound up her own beautiful hair every day; and I took
rticular notice that this was always before she sang her
ng at night, when every one looked at her. But she
ver did it after the loss of her darling; and it would have 35
en now all tangled with dirt and wet, but that Miss Cole-

shaw was careful of it long after she was, herself, and would sometimes smooth it down with her weak thin hands.

We were past mustering a story now; but one day, about this period, I reverted to the superstition of old Mr. Rarx, concerning the Golden Lucy, and told them that nothing vanished from the eye of God, though much might pass away from the eyes of men. "We were all of us," says I, "children once; and our baby feet have strolled in green woods ashore; and our baby hands have gathered flowers in gardens, where the birds were singing. These children that we were, are not lost to the great knowledge of our Creator. Those innocent creatures will appear with us before Him, and plead for us. What we were in the best time of our generous youth will arise and go with us too. The purest part of our lives will not desert us at the pass to which all of us here present are gliding. What we were then, will be as much in existence before Him, as what we are now." They were no less comforted by this consideration, than I was myself; and Miss Coleshaw, drawing my ear nearer to her lips, said, "Captain Rander, I was on my way to marry a disgraced and broken man, whom I dearly loved when he was honourable and good. Your words seem to have come out of my own poor heart." She pressed my hand upon it, smiling.

Twenty-seven nights and twenty-six days. We were in no want of rain-water, but we had nothing else. And yet, even now, I never turned my eyes on a waking face but it tried to brighten before mine. O, what a thing it is, in a time of danger and in the presence of death, the shining of a face upon a face! I have heard it broached that orders should be given in great new ships by electric telegraph. I *admire* machinery as much as any man, and am as thankful to it as any man can be for what it does for us. But it will never be a substitute for the face of a man, with his

in it, encouraging another man to be brave and true. or try it for that. It will break down like a straw. now began to remark certain changes in myself which I not like. They caused me much disquiet. I often the Golden Lucy in the air above the boat. I often 5 her I have spoken of before, sitting beside me. I saw Golden Mary go down, as she really had gone down, many times in a day. And yet the sea was mostly, to my liking, not sea neither, but moving country and extraordinary mountainous regions, the like of which have 10 or been beheld. I felt it time to leave my last words regarding John Steadiman, in case any lips should last out repeat them to any living ears. I said that John had me (as he had on deck) that he had sung out "Breakers ahead!" the instant they were audible, and had tried to 15 ship, but she struck before it could be done. (His I dare say, had made my dream.) I said that the circumstances were altogether without warning, and out of course that could have been guarded against; that same loss would have happened if I had been in charge; 20 that John was not to blame, but from first to last had his duty nobly, like the man he was. I tried to write down in my pocket-book, but could make no words, though I knew what the words were that I wanted to be. When it had come to that, her hands—though 25 was dead so long—laid me down gently in the bottom of the boat, and she and the Golden Lucy swung me to rest.

What follows, was written by John Steadiman, Chief
mate.

30

On the twenty-sixth day after the foundering of the Golden Mary at sea, I, John Steadiman, was sitting in my berth in the stern-sheets of the Surf-boat, with just sense enough left in me to steer—that is to say, with my eyes closed, wide-awake, over the bows of the boat, and my 35

brains fast asleep and dreaming—when I was roused upon a sudden by our second mate, Mr. William Rames.

“Let me take a spell in your place,” says he. “And let you out for the Long-boat astern. The last time she rose on the crest of a wave, I thought I made out a signal flying aboard her.”

We shifted our places, clumsily and slowly enough, but we were both of us weak and dazed with wet, cold, and hunger. I waited some time, watching the heavy rollers astern, before the Long-boat rose atop of one of them at the same time with us. At last, she was heaved for a moment well in view, and there, sure enough, was the signal flying aboard of her—a strip of rag of some color rigged to an oar, and hoisted in her bows.

“What does it mean?” says Rames to me in a quavering, trembling sort of voice, “Do they signal a sail in sight?”

“Hush, for God’s sake!” says I, clapping my hand over his mouth. “Don’t let the people hear you. They will all go mad together if we mislead them about that signal.”

Wait a bit, till I have another look at it.” I held on by him, for he had set me all of a tremble with his notion of a sail in sight, and watched for the Long-boat again. Up she rose on the top of another roller, made out the signal clearly, that second time, and I was sure that it was rigged half-mast high.

“Rames,” says I, “it’s a signal of distress. Pass the word forward to keep her before the sea, and no more delay. We must get the Long-boat within hailing distance of her as soon as possible.”

I dropped down into my old place at the tiller without another word—for the thought went through me like a knife that something had happened to Captain Raven. I should consider myself unworthy to write another line of this statement, if I had not made up my mind to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I must, therefore, confess plainly that now, for the

me, my heart sank within me. This weakness on my part was produced in some degree, as I take it, by the exhausting effects of previous anxiety and grief.

Our provisions—if I may give that name to what we had left—were reduced to the rind of one lemon and about a couple of handfuls of coffee-berries. Besides these great stresses, caused by the death, the danger, and the suffering among my crew and passengers, I had had a little stress of my own to shake me still more, in the death of the child whom I had got to be very fond of on the voyage out—so fond that I was secretly a little jealous of her being taken in the Long-boat instead of mine when the ship foundered. It used to be a great comfort to me, and I think to those with me also, after we had seen the mast of the Golden Mary, to see the Golden Lucy, held up by the men in the Long-boat, when the weather allowed as the best and brightest sight they had to show. She looked, at the distance we saw her from, almost like a little white bird in the air. To miss her for the first time, when the weather lulled a little again, and we all looked out for our white bird and looked in vain, was a sore disappointment. To see the men's heads bowed down and the captain's hand pointing into the sea when we hailed the Long-boat, a few days after, gave me as heavy a shock as sharp a pang of heartache to bear as ever I remember suffering in all my life. I only mention these things to show that if I did give way a little at first, under the dread that our captain was lost to us, it was not without having been a good deal shaken beforehand by more trials of one sort or another than often fall to one man's share.

I had got over the choking in my throat with the help of a drop of water, and had steadied my mind again so as to be prepared against the worst, when I heard the hail word help the poor fellows, how weak it sounded!—"Surf-boat, ahoy!"

I looked up, and there were our companions in mis-

fortune tossing abreast of us; not so near that we could make out the features of any of them, but near enough with some exertion for people in our condition, to make their voices heard in the intervals when the wind was weakest.

I answered the hail, and waited a bit, and heard nothing and then sung out the captain's name. The voice which replied did not sound like his; the words that reached me were:

10 "Chief mate wanted on board!"

Every man of my crew knew what that meant as well as I did. As second officer in command, there could be but one reason for wanting me on board the Long-boat. A groan went all round us, and my men looked despairing in each other's faces, and whispered under their breath:

"The captain is dead!"

I commanded them to be silent, and not to make any sure of bad news, at such a pass as things had now come to with us. Then, hailing the Long-boat, I signified that I was ready to go on board when the weather would let up—stopped a bit to draw a good long breath—and then called out as loud as I could the dreadful question:

"Is the captain dead?"

The black figures of three or four men in the after-part of the Long-boat all stooped down together as my voice reached them. They were lost to view for about a minute, then appeared again—one man among them was standing up on his feet by the rest, and he hailed back the following words (a very faint hope went a very long way with people in our desperate situation): "Not yet!"

The relief felt by me, and by all with me, when I knew that our captain, though unfitted for duty, was not lost to us, it is not in words—at least, not in such words as a man like me can command—to express. I did not *hesitate* to cheer the men by telling them what a good chance it was that we were not as badly off yet as we had been.

and then communicated what instructions I had to give, to William Rames, who was to be left in command in my place when I took charge of the Long-boat. After that, there was nothing to be done, but to wait for the chance of the wind dropping at sunset, and the sea going down afterwards, so as to enable our weak crews to lay the two boats alongside of each other, without undue risk—or, to put it plainer, without saddling ourselves with the necessity for any extraordinary exertion of strength or skill. Both the one and the other had now been starved out of us for days and days together.

At sunset the wind suddenly dropped, but the sea, which had been running high for so long a time past, took hours after that before it showed any signs of getting to rest. The moon was shining, the sky was wonderfully clear, and it could not have been, according to my calculations, far off midnight, when the long, slow, regular swell of the calming ocean fairly set in, and I took the responsibility of assessing the distance between the Long-boat and ourselves.

It was, I dare say, a delusion of mine; but I thought I had never seen the moon shine so white and ghastly anywhere, either at sea or on land, as she shone that night while we were approaching our companions in misery. When there was not much more than a boat's length between us, and the white light streamed cold and clear over all our faces, both crews rested on their oars with the great shudder, and stared over the gunwale of either boat, panic-stricken at the first sight of each other.

"Any lives lost among you?" I asked, in the midst of that frightful silence.

The men in the Long-boat huddled together like sheep to the sound of my voice.

"None yet, but the child, thanks be to God!" answered one among them.

And at the sound of his voice, all my men shrank

together like the men in the Long-boat. I was afraid to let the horror produced by our first meeting at close quarters after the dreadful changes that wet, cold, and famine had produced, last one moment longer than could
5 be helped; so, without giving time for any more questions and answers, I commanded the men to lay the two boats close alongside of each other. When I rose up and committed the tiller to the hands of Rames, all my poor fellows raised their white faces imploringly to mine.
10 "Don't leave us, sir," they said, "don't leave us." "I leave you," says I, "under the command and the guidance of Mr. William Rames, as good a sailor as I am, and as trusty and kind a man as ever stepped. Do your duty by him, as you have done it by me; and remember to the
15 last, that while there is life there is hope. God bless and help you all." With those words I collected what strength I had left, and caught at two arms that were held out to me, and so got from the stern-sheets of one boat into the stern-sheets of the other.
20 "Mind where you step, sir," whispered one of the men who had helped me into the Long-boat. I looked down as he spoke. Three figures were huddled up below me, with the moonshine falling on them in ragged streaks through the gaps between the men standing or sitting
25 above them. The first face I made out was the face of Miss Coleshaw, her eyes were wide open and fixed on me. She seemed still to keep her senses, and, by the alternating and closing of her lips, to be trying to speak, but I could not hear that she uttered a single word. On
30 her shoulder rested the head of Mrs. Atherfield. The mother of our poor little Golden Lucy must, I think, have been dreaming of the child she had lost; for there was a faint smile just ruffling the white stillness of her face, when I first saw it turned upward, with peaceful closed
35 eyes towards the heavens. From her, I looked down a little, and there, with his head on her lap, and with

ne of her hands resting tenderly on his cheek—there lay
ie captain, to whose help and guidance, up to this miser-
ble time, we had never looked in vain,—there, worn out
last in our service, and for our sakes, lay the best and
-avest man of all our company. I stole my hand in 5
-ntly through his clothes and laid it on his heart, and
lt a little feeble warmth over it, though my cold dulled
uch could not detect even the faintest beating. The two
en in the stern-sheets with me, noticing what I was
-ing—knowing I loved him like a brother—and seeing, 10
suppose, more distress in my face than I myself was
nscious of its showing, lost command over themselves
together, and burst into a piteous moaning; sobbing
-mentation over him. One of the two drew aside a
cket from his feet, and showed me that they were bare, 15
cept where a wet, ragged strip of stocking still clung
one of them. When the ship struck the Iceberg, he
d run on deck leaving his shoes in his cabin. All
rough the voyage in the boat his feet had been unpro-
-ted; and not a soul had discovered it until he dropped! 20
; long as he could keep his eyes open, the very look of
em had cheered the men, and comforted and upheld
e women. Not one living creature in the boat, with
y sense about him, but had felt the good influence of
at brave man in one way or another. Not one but had 25
ard him, over and over again, give the credit to others
-ich was due only to himself; praising this man for
-tience, and thanking that man for help, when the
-tience and the help had really and truly, as to the best
rt or both, come only from him. All this, and much 30
ore, I heard pouring confusedly from the men's lips
-ile they crouched down, sobbing and crying over
eir commander, and wrapping the jacket as warmly
d tenderly as they could over his cold feet. It went
my heart to check them; but I knew that if this lament-
spirit spread any further, all chance of keeping alight

any last sparks of hope and resolution among the boat's company would be lost for ever. Accordingly I sent them to their places, spoke a few encouraging words to the men forward, promising to serve out, when the morning
5 came, as much as I dared, of any eatable thing left in the lockers; called to Rames, in my old boat, to keep as near us as he safely could; drew the garments and coverings of the two poor suffering women more closely about them; and, with a secret prayer to be directed for the best in
10 bearing the awful responsibility now laid on my shoulders took my captain's vacant place at the helm of the Long-boat.

This, as well as I can tell it, is the full and true account of how I came to be placed in charge of the lost passengers
15 and crew of the Golden Mary, on the morning of the twenty-seventh day after the ship struck the Iceberg, and foundered at sea.

CHAPTER II

THE DELIVERANCE

When the sun rose on the twenty-seventh day of our calamity, the first question that I secretly asked myself was, How many more mornings will the stoutest of us live to see? I had kept count, ever since we took to the boats, of the days of the week; and I knew that we had now arrived at another Thursday. Judging by my own sensations (and I believe I had as much strength left as the best man among us), I came to the conclusion that, unless the mercy of Providence interposed to effect our deliverance, not one of our company could hope to see another morning after the morning of Sunday. 5 10

Two discoveries that I made—after redeeming my promise overnight, to serve out with the morning whatever eatable thing I could find—helped to confirm me in my gloomy view of our future prospects. In the first place, when the few coffee-berries left, together with a small allowance of water, had been shared all round, I found on examining the lockers that not one grain of provision remained, fore or aft, in any part of the boat, and that our stock of fresh water was reduced to not much more than would fill a wine-bottle. In the second place, after the berries had been shared, and the water equally divided, I noticed that the sustenance thus administered produced no effect whatever, even of the most momentary kind, in raising the spirits of the passengers (excepting in one case) or in rallying the strength of the crew. The exception was Mr. Rarx. This tough and greedy old sinner seemed to wake up from the trance he had lain in so long, 15 20 25

when the smell of the berries and water was under
He swallowed his share with a gulp that many a
and better man in the boat might have envied; and
maundering on to himself afterwards, as if he
5 a new lease of life. He fancied now that he was
a gold-mine, all by himself, and going down
straight through the earth at the rate of thirty
miles an hour. "Leave me alone," says he, "le
alone. The lower I go, the richer I get. Down
10 down, down, down, down, till I burst out at the ot
of the world in a shower of gold!" So he went on,
feebly with his heels from time to time against the
of the boat.

But, as for all the rest, it was a pitiful and
15 sight to see of how little use their last shadow of
was to them. I myself attended, before anybody
served, to the two poor women. Miss Coleshav
her head faintly, and pointed to her throat, when I
her the few berries that fell to her share. I made
20 to crush them up fine and mix them with a little
and got her to swallow that miserable drop of dri
the greatest difficulty. When it was down there c
change for the better over her face. Nor did she
for so much as a moment, the capacity to spea
25 in a whisper. I next tried Mrs. Atherfield. It w
to wake her out of the half-swooning, half-sleepi
dition in which she lay,—and harder still to get her
her lips when I put the tin-cup to them. When
at last prevailed on her to swallow her allowan
30 shut her eyes again, and fell back into her old p
I saw her lips moving; and, putting my ear close to
caught some of the words she was murmuring to
She was still dreaming of the Golden Lucy. She
child were walking somewhere by the banks of
5 *at the time the buttercups are out. The Gold*
was gathering the buttercups, and making herself

ain out of them, in imitation of the chain that her
ther wore. They were carrying a little basket with
m, and were going to dine together in a great hollow
growing on the banks of the lake. To get this pretty
ture painted on one's mind as I got it, while listening 5
the poor mother's broken words, and then to look up
the haggard faces of the men in the boat, and at the
ocean rolling all round us, was such a change from
cy to reality as it has fallen, I hope, to few men's lots
experience.

My next thought, when I had done my best for the
men, was for the captain. I was free to risk losing my
share of water, if I pleased, so I tried, before tasting
myself, to get a little between his lips; but his teeth were
clenched, and I had neither strength nor skill to open 15
m. The faint warmth still remained, thank God, over
heart—but, in all other respects he lay beneath us like a
d man. In covering him up again as comfortably as
uld, I found a bit of paper crunched in one of his hands,
I took it out. There was some writing on it, but not a 20
d was readable. I suppose, poor fellow, that he had
n trying to write some last instructions for me, just
ore he dropped at his post. If they had been ever so
to read, they would have been of no use now. To
ow instructions we must have had some power to shape 25
boat's course in a given direction—and this, which we
been gradually losing for some days past, we had now
altogether.

I had hoped that the serving out of the refreshment
uld have put a little modicum of strength into the arms 30
he men at the oars; but, as I have hinted, this hope
ed out to be perfectly fruitless. Our last mockery of
eal, which had done nothing for the passengers, did
ing either for the crew—except to aggravate the pangs
unger in the men who were still strong enough to feel 35
a. While the weather held moderate, it was not of

much consequence if one or two of the rowers kept dipping, in turn, into a kind of faint sleep over their oars. But if it came on to blow again (and we could expect it to blow else in those seas and at that time of the year), how could I to steer, when the blades of the oars were out of the water ten times as often as they were in? The lives which we were undergoing such suffering to preserve would have been in an instant by the swamping of the boat, if the wind had risen on the morning of Thursday, and had caught us trying to row any longer.

Feeling this, I resolved, while the weather held moderately fine, to hoist the best substitute for a sail that I could produce, and to drive before the wind, on the chance (the last we had hope for) of a ship picking us up. We only continued to use the oars up to this time in order to keep the course which the captain had pointed out as the likeliest to bring us near the land. Sailing had been the question from the first, the masts and suits of rig belonging to each boat having been out of them a long time of the wreck, and having gone down with the boats. This was an accident which there was no need to dwell on for we were too crowded from the first to admit of handling the boats properly, under their regular press of sail, in anything like rough weather.

Having made up my mind on what it was necessary to do, I addressed the men, and told them that any notion of holding longer on our course with the oars was manifestly out of the question, and dangerous to all on board, as their own common sense might tell them, in the state to which the stoutest arms among us were now reduced. They all looked round on each other as I said that, each seeming to think his neighbour weaker than himself. I went on, and told them that we must take advantage of the present glimpse of moderate weather, and hoist the best sail we could set up, and drive before the wind, in the hope that it might please God to direct us in the way of

fore it was too late. "Our only chance, my men," in conclusion, "is the chance of being picked up; these desolate seas one point of the compass is justly a point for our necessities as another. Half of the boat before the sea, the other half bring out oars, and do as I tell you." The prospect of being freed from the oars struck the wandering attention of the men directly; and they said, "Ay, ay, sir!" with some- like a faint reflection of their former readiness, when the ship was under their feet, and the mess-cans were filled with plenty of wholesome food.

Thanks to Captain Ravender's forethought in providing the boats with a coil of rope, we had our lashings, and the means of making what rigging was wanted, ready to hand. One of the oars was made fast to the thwart, and lashed fore and aft, for a mast. A large pilot-coat was spread; enough of sail for us. The only thing that puzzled me was occasioned by the necessity of finding a yard. The men tried to tear up one of the oars, but were not strong enough. My own knife had been taken in the attempt to split a bit of plank for them; it was almost at my wit's end, when I luckily thought of searching the captain's pockets for his knife. I found there a large knife of Sheffield manufacture, with plenty of blades, and a small saw among them. With this we shifted to saw off about a third of another oar; and the difficulty was conquered; and we got my pilot-coat fastened on our jury-mast, and rigged it as nigh as we could to the fashion of a lug-sail.

I looked anxiously towards the Surf-boat, while we were rigging our mast, and observed, with a feeling of relief, that the men in her—as soon as they discovered what we were about—were wise enough to follow our example. They got on faster than we did; being less cramped for room to turn round in. We set our sails as soon as possible about the same time; and it was well for

both boats that we finished our work when we did. noon the wind began to rise again to a stiff breeze, and soon knocked up a heavy, tumbling sea. We crept before it in a direction North by East, keeping wonderfully dry, considering all things. The mast stood well; the sail, small as it was, did good service in steadying the boat and lifting her easily over the seas. I felt the after the loss of my coat, but not so badly as I had feared for the two men who were with me in the stern-sloop. I sat as close as they could on either side of me, and huddled with the warmth of their own bodies to keep the warmth mine. Forward, I told off half a dozen of the most trustworthy of the men who could still muster strength enough to keep their eyes open, to set a watch, turn and turn about on our frail rigging. The wind was steadily increasing, and if any accident happened to our mast the chances were that the boat would broach-to, and that every one of us would go to the bottom.

So we drove on—all through that day—sometimes catching sight of the Surf-boat a little ahead of us—sometimes losing her altogether in the scud. How little frail how very different to the kind of boat that I expected to see, she looked to my eyes now that I was so close to her, and saw what she showed like on the waters for the first time! But to return to the Long-boat. The work on the rigging was relieved every two hours, and at the same regular periods all the brightest eyes left among us looked out for the smallest vestige of a sail in view, but looked in vain. Among the passengers, nothing happened in the way of a change—except that Miss Cole seemed to grow fainter, and that Mrs. Atherfield got less, as if she were waking out of her long dream about the Golden Lucy.

It got on towards sunset. The wind was rising to a heavy gale. The clouds, which had been heavy all over the sky since noon, were lifting to the westward, and

re, over the horizon line of the ocean, a long strip
t, pale, greenish sky, overhung by a cloud-bank,
ragged edges were tipped with burning crimson by
. I did not like the look of the night, and, keep-
re I was, in the forward part of the boat, I helped 5
to ease the strain off our mast, by lowering the
ttle and taking a pull on the sheet, so as to present
ind a smaller surface even of our small sail. Not-
wild look of the weather, and the precautions we
aking against the chance of a gale rising in the 10
and being, furthermore, as I believe, staggered
minds by the death that had taken place among
three of the passengers struggled up in the bottom
boat, clasped their arms around me as if they were
ng men already, and hoarsely clamoured for a last 15
f water, before the storm rose and sent us all to
om.

er you shall have," I said, "when I think the time
e to serve it out. The time has not come yet."
er, pray!" they all three groaned together. Two 20
assengers who were asleep, woke up, and joined the

ace!" I said. "There are not two spoonfuls of
ater left for each man in the boat. I shall wait
ours more for the chance of rain before I serve that 25
ilence, and drop back to your places!"

let go of me, but clamoured weakly for water still;
s time, the voices of some of the crew joined them.
moment, to my great alarm (for I thought they were
ad and turning violent against me), I was seized 30
he neck by one of the men, who had been standing
ling on by the mast, and looking out steadily to the
tward.

sed my right hand to free myself; but before I
him, the sight of the man's face close to mine 35
e drop my arm again. There was a speechless,

breathless, frantic joy in it, that made all the blood veins stand still in a moment.

"Out with it!" I said. "Man alive, out with God's sake!"

5 His breath beat on my cheek in hot, quick, heavy but he could not utter a word. For a moment he the mast (tightening his hold on me with the oar and pointed out westward—then slid heavily down the thwart behind us.

10 I looked westward, and saw that one of the two worthy men whom I had left at the helm was on looking out westward, too. As the boat rose, I lay eyes on the strip of clear greenish sky in the west the bright line of the sea just under it. The boat again before I could see anything. I squeezed my together to get the water out of them, and when again looked straight into the middle of the bright line. My heart bounded as if it would choke—my tongue felt like a cinder in my mouth—my knees
20 way under me—I dropped down on to the thwart sobbed out, with a great effort, as if I had been dead weeks before, and had only that instant found my
"A sail! a sail!"

The words were instantly echoed by the man in the
25 sheets.

"Sail, ho!" he screeches out, turning round on swinging his arms about his head like a madman.

This made three of our company who had seen already, and that one fact was sufficient to render
30 dread lest our eyes might have been deceiving us great fear now was, not that we were deluded, but might come to some serious harm through the enjoyment among the people; that is to say, among such people as still had the sense to feel and the strength
35 *express what they felt.* I must record in my own *tion, after confessing* that I lost command of

together on the discovery of the sail, that I was the first to set the example of self-control. I was in a manner forced to this by the crew frantically entreating me to lay-to—until we could make out what course the ship was steering—a proceeding which, with the sea then running, with a heavy lading of the boat, and with such feeble substitutes for mast and sail as we possessed, must have been ended with total destruction to us all. I tried to remind the men of this, but they were in such a transport—hugging each other round the neck, and crying and laughing all in breath—that they were not fit to listen to reason. Accordingly, I myself went to the helm again, and chose the steadiest of my two men in the after-part of the boat: a guard over the sheet, with instructions to use force necessary, towards any one who stretched out so much as finger to it. The wind was rising every minute, and we did nothing for it but to scud, and be thankful to God's mercy that we had sea-room to do it in.

"It will be dark in an hour's time, sir," says the man left with me when I took the helm again. "We have nothing to show. The ship will pass us in the night. Lay-to, for the love of Heaven, give us all a chance, and lay-to," says he, and goes down on his knees before me, rubbing his hands.

"Lay-to!" says I. "Lay-to, under a coat! Lay-to, in a way like this, with the wind getting up to a gale! A seaman does not talk in that way! Who have I got along here with? Sailors who know their craft, or a pack of 'long-rear' lubbers, who ought to be turned adrift in a ferry-boat or a pond?" My heart was heavy enough, God knows, but I spoke out as loud as I could, in that light way, to try and shame the men back to their proper senses. I succeeded at least in restoring silence; and that was something in such a condition as ours.

My next anxiety was to know if the men in the Surf-boat sighted the sail to the westward. She was still driv-

ing ahead of us, and the first time I saw her rise on waves, I made out a signal on board—a strip of cloth fast to a boat-hook. I ordered the man by my side to return with his jacket tied on to the end of the oar; being anxious to see whether his agitation had calmed down and left him fit for his duty again. He followed my direction steadily and when he got his jacket on again, asked me to permit him for losing his self-command, in a quiet, altered

I shook hands with him, and gave him the help and proof that my confidence was restored; then stood up and turned my face to the westward once again. I looked into the belt of clear sky, which was narrowing already as the cloud-bank above sank over it. I looked with a heart and soul and strength. It was only when my eyes could stand the strain on them no longer, that I gave up and sat down again by the tiller. If I had not been supported by a firm trust in the mercy of Providence, which had served us thus far, I am afraid I should have abandoned myself at that trying time to downright hopeless, spiritless despair.

It would not express much to any but seafaring men if I mentioned the number of leagues off that I considered the ship to be. I shall give a better idea of the terrible distance there was between us, when I say that no land or eye could have made her out at all, and that none of our sailors could have seen her but for the bright opening in the sky, which made even a speck on the waters visible to a mariner's experienced sight all that weary way. When I have said this, I have said enough to render plain to every man's understanding that it was an impossibility to make out what course the ship was steering, seeing that we had no chance of keeping her in view at the closing time of day for more than another half-hour at most. There she was, astern to leeward of us; and *there we were, driving for our lives before the wind, with no means of kindling a light that we might have possessed*

ing our ship wetted through long ago—with no guns
fire as signals of distress in the darkness—and with no
ice, if the wind shifted, but still to scud in any direction
which it might please to drive us. Supposing, even at
best, that the ship was steering on our course, and
old overhaul us in the night, what chance had we of
finding our position known to her in the darkness? Truly
that it anyhow we might from our poor mortal point of
view, our prospect of deliverance seemed to be of the most
ridiculously hopeless kind that it is possible to conceive.

The men felt this bitterly, as the cloud-bank dropped to
the verge of the waters, and the sun set redly behind it.
The moaning and lamenting among them was miserable
to hear, when the last speck and phantom of the ship had
vanished from view. Some few still swore they saw her
in the distance, but there was hardly a flicker of light left in the west, and
they gave up looking out, and dropped down in the boat,
on my express orders. I charged them all solemnly to set
a good example of courage to the passengers, and to trust the
all-wise to the infinite wisdom and mercy of the Creator of us all.
Some murmured, some fell to repeating scraps out of the
Bible and Prayer-Book, some wandered again in their
thoughts. This went on till the darkness gathered—then a
dead hush of silence fell drearily over passengers and crew;
and the waves and the wind hissed and howled about us,
as if we were tossing in the midst of them, a boat-load of
helpless wretches already!

Twice in the fore-part of the night the clouds overhead
parted for a little, and let the blessed moonlight down upon

On the first of those occasions, I myself served out the
last drops of fresh water we had left. The two women—
poor suffering creatures!—were past drinking. Miss
Henshaw shivered a little when I moistened her lips with
water; and Mrs. Atherfield, when I did the same for
her; *drew her breath with a faint, fluttering sigh, which was*
enough to show that she was not dead yet. The cap-

tain still lay as he had lain ever since I got on board the boat. The others, both passengers and crew, managed for the most part to swallow their share of the water—the men being just sufficiently roused by it to get up on the knees, while the moonlight lasted, and look about wildly over the ocean for a chance of seeing the ship again. When the clouds gathered once more, they crouched back in their places with a long groan of despair. Hearing that and dreading the effect of the pitchy darkness (to say nothing of the fierce wind and sea) on their sinking spirits, resolved to combat their despondency, if it were still possible to contend against it, by giving them something to do. First telling them that no man could say at what time of the night the ship (in case she was steering our course) might forge ahead of us, or how near she might be when she passed, I recommended that all who had the strength should join their voices at regular intervals, and shout the loudest when the boat rose highest on the waves, on the chance of that cry of distress being borne by the wind within hearing of the watch on board the ship. It is unnecessary to say that I knew well how near it was to an absolute impossibility that this last feeble exertion on our part could lead to any result. I only proposed it because I was driven to the end of my resources to keep up the faintest flicker of spirit among the men. They received my proposal with more warmth and readiness than I had ventured, in their hopeless state, to expect from them. Up to the turn of midnight they resolutely raised their voices with me, at intervals of from five to ten minutes, whenever the boat was tossed highest on the waves. The wind seemed to whirl our weak cries savagely out of our mouths almost before we could utter them. I, sitting astern in the boat, only heard them, as it seemed, for something like an instant of time. But even that was enough to make me creep all over—the cry was so forlorn and fearful. Of dreadful sounds I had heard since the first striking of

ship, that shrill wail of despair—rising on the wave—
one moment; whirled away the next, into the black
t—was the most frightful that entered my ears. There
times, even now, when it seems to be ringing in them

Whether our first gleam of moonshine fell upon old Mr.
t, while he was sleeping, and helped to upset his weak
is altogether, is more than I can say. But, for some
on or other, before the clouds parted and let the light
n on us for the second time, and while we were driv- 10
along awfully through the blackest of the night, he
ed in his place, and began rambling and raving again
vehemently than ever. To hear him now,—that is
y, as well as I could hear him for the wind,—he was
down in his gold-mine; but was laden so heavy with 15
precious metal that he could not get out, and was in
al peril of being drowned by the water rising in the
om of the shaft. So far, his maundering attracted my
tion disagreeably, and did no more. But when he
n—if I may say so—to take the name of the dear 20
dead child in vain, and to mix her up with himself
his miserly greed of gain, I got angry and called to
men forward to give him a shake and make him
his tongue. Whether any of them obeyed or not, I
t know—Mr. Rarx went on raving louder than ever. 25

shrill wind was now hardly more shrill than he.
swore he saw the white frock of our poor little lost pet
ering in the daylight, at the top of the mine, and he
amed out to her in a great fright that the gold was
y, and the water rising fast, and that she must come 30
n as quick as lightning if she meant to be in time to
them. I called again angrily to the men to silence
; and just as I did so, the clouds began to part for the
nd time, and the white tip of the moon grew visible.

There she is!" screeches Mr. Rarx; and I saw him by 35
aint light, scramble on his knees in the bottom of the

boat, and wave a ragged old handkerchief up at
"Pull him down!" I called out. "Down with
tie his arms and legs!"

Of the men who could still move about, not
5 any attention to me. They were all upon the
again, looking out in the strengthening moonlight
sight of the ship.

"Quick, Golden Lucy!" screams Mr. Rarx, 8
under the thwarts right forward into the bows of
10 "Quick! my darling, my beauty, quick! The
heavy, and the water rises fast! Come down and
Golden Lucy! Let all the rest of the world do
save me! Me! me! me! me!"

He shouted these last words out at the top of his
15 croaking voice, and got on his feet, as I conjectured
the coat we had spread for a sail now hid him
in the bows of the boat. Not one of the crew so
looked round at him, so eagerly were their eyes
for the ship. The man sitting by me was sunk
20 sleep. If I had left the helm for a moment in
and sea, it would have been the death of every
us. I shouted desperately to the raving wreck
down. A screech that seemed to cut the very
two answered me. A huge wave tossed the boat
25 up wildly at the same moment. I looked aside
as the wash of the great roller swept by us, glancing
a lurid, bluish white in the moonbeams; I looked
saw, in one second of time, the face of Mr. Rarx
on the wave, with the foam seething in his hair
30 moon shining in his eyes. Before I could draw
he was a hundred yards astern of us, and the
the sea had swallowed him up and had hid him
which he had kept all the voyage, from our mortal
for ever.

"He's gone! he's drowned!" I shouted to

None of them took any notice; none of them left off looking out over the ocean for a sight of the ship. Nothing that I could say on the subject of our situation at that fearful time can, in my opinion, give such an idea of the extremity and the frightfulness of it, as the relation of this one fact. I leave it to speak by itself the sad and shocking truth, and pass on gladly to the telling of what happened next, at a later hour of the night.

After the clouds had shut out the moon again, the wind dropped a little and shifted a point or two, so as to shape our course nearer to the eastward. How the hours passed after that, till the dawn came, is more than I can tell. The nearer the time of daylight approached the more completely everything seemed to drop out of my mind, except the one thought of where the ship we had seen the evening might be, when we looked for her with the morning light.

It came at last—that grey, quiet light which was to end our uncertainty; which was to show us if we were saved, or to warn us if we were to prepare for death. With the first streak in the east, every one of the boat's company, except the sleeping and the senseless, roused and looked out in breathless silence upon the sea. Slowly and slowly the daylight strengthened, and the darkness rolled off farther and farther before it over the face of the waters. The first pale flush of the sun flew gleaming along the paths of light broken through the grey wastes of the eastern clouds. We could look clearly—we could see far; and there, ahead of us—O! merciful, bountiful providence of God!—there was the ship!

I have honestly owned the truth, and confessed to the human infirmity under suffering of myself, my passengers, and my crew. I have earned, therefore, as I would fain hope, the right to record it to the credit of all, that when, the moment they set eyes on the ship, poured out their whole heart in humble thanksgiving to the Divine

Mercy which had saved them from the very jaws of death. They did not wait for me to bid them do this; but of their own accord, in their own language, fervently and earnestly, with one will and one heart.

- 5 We had hardly made the ship out—a fine brigantine hoisting English colours—before we observed the crew suddenly hoist her up in the wind. At first I was at a loss to understand this; but as we drew near we discovered that she was getting the Surf-boat (which I kept ahead of us all through the night) alongside under the lee bow. My men tried to cheer when they saw their companions in safety, but their weak cries died away in tears and sobbing.

- In another half-hour we, too, were alongside the brigantine.

- From this point I recollect nothing very distinctly. I remember faintly many loud voices and eager faces. I remember fresh strong willing fellows, with a colour in their cheeks, and a smartness in their movements. 30 They seemed quite preternatural to me at that time, I was over us in the rigging of the brigantine, and drew down from her sides into our boat;—I remember with my feeble hands to help them in the difficult and perilous task of getting the two poor women and the captain on board;—I remember one dark hair of a man swearing that it was enough to break his neck, and catching me in his arms like a child—and from that moment I remember nothing more with the same certainty for over a week of time.

- 30 When I came to my own senses again, in my quarters on board the brigantine my first inquiries were not for my fellow-sufferers. Two—a passenger in the Surf-boat, and one of the crew of the Surf-boat—had survived *in spite of* all the care that could be taken of them. 35 *rest were likely, with time and attention, to recover; of those who have been particularly mentioned*

ve, Mrs. Atherfield had shown signs of rallying
onest; Miss Coleshaw, who had held out longer
exhaustion, was now the slower to recover. Cap-
avender, though slowly mending, was still not able
k or to move in his cot without help. The sacrifices 5
all which this good man had so nobly undergone,
y in the boat, but before that, when he had deprived
f of his natural rest on the dark nights that preceded
eck of the Golden Mary, had sadly undermined his
l strength of constitution. He, the heartiest of all, 10
we sailed from England, was now, through his
rying devotion to his duty and to us, the last to
e, the longest to linger between life and death.
next questions (when they helped me on deck to
first blessed breath of fresh air) related to the 15
that had saved us. She was bound to the Columbia
—a long way to the northward of the port for which
l sailed in the Golden Mary. Most providentially
shortly after we had lost sight of the brigantine
shades of the evening, she had been caught in a 20
and had sprung her foretopmast badly. This
it had obliged them to lay-to for some hours, while
id their best to secure the spar, and had warned
when they continued on their course, to keep the
nder easy sail through the night. But for this 25
stance we must, in all human probability, have
o far astern when the morning dawned, to have had
ghtest chance of being discovered.
epting always some of the stoutest of our men,
st of the Long-boat's company who was helped on 30
vas Mrs. Atherfield. Poor soul! when she and I
oked at each other, I could see that her heart went
o the early days of our voyage, when the Golden
and I used to have our game of hide-and-seek
the mast. She squeezed my hand as hard as she 35
with her wasted trembling fingers, and looked up

piteously in my face, as if she would like to speak Lucy's playfellow, but dared not trust herself turned away quickly and laid her head against the wall, and looked out upon the desolate sea. There was nothing to her now but her darling's grave. I was pleased when I saw her later in the day, sitting by Ravender's cot; for she seemed to take comfort in him. Miss Coleshaw soon afterwards got strong enough to relieve her at this duty; and, between them, the captain such a world of good, both in body and mind, that he also got strong enough before long to go on deck, and to thank me, in his old generous self-way, for having done my duty—the duty which he had learnt how to do by his example.

Hearing what our destination had been when we sailed from England, the captain of the brigantine (who had treated us with the most unremitting attention and kindness, and had been warmly seconded in his efforts by all the people under his command) volunteered to go sufficiently out of his course to enable us to visit the first Californian coasting-vessel sailing in the bay of San Francisco. We were lucky in meeting her much sooner than we expected. Three days after parting from the kind captain of the brigantine, the surviving passengers and crew of the Golden Mary touched the firm ground once more, on the shores of California.

We were hardly collected here before we were ordered to separate again. Captain Ravender, though hardly yet in good travelling trim, accompanied Mrs. Atherfield inland, to see her safe under her husband's protection. Miss Coleshaw went with them, to see Mrs. Atherfield for a little while before she was to proceed with any matters of her own which had to be done in this part of the world. The rest of us, however, had nothing particular to do until the

rn, followed the passengers to the gold-diggings. A few of us had enough of the life there in a very short time. The rest seemed bitten by old Mr. Rarx's mania for gold, and insisted on stopping behind when Rames

I proposed going back to the port. We two, and 5
of our steadiest seamen, were all the officers and crew
to meet the captain on his return from the inland
country.

He reported that he had left Mrs. Atherfield and
his Coleshaw safe and comfortable under Mr. Ather- 10
field's care. They sent affectionate messages to all of us,
especially (I am proud to say) to me. After hearing
good news, there seemed nothing better to do than
ship on board the first vessel bound for England. There
were plenty in port, ready to sail and only waiting for 15
men belonging to them who had deserted to the gold-
diggings. We were all snapped up eagerly, and offered
whatever rate we chose to set on our services, the moment we
were known our readiness to ship for England—all,
except to have said, except Captain Ravender, who went 20
along with us in the capacity of passenger only.

Nothing of any moment occurred on the voyage back.
The captain and I got ashore at Gravesend safe and
sundry, and went up to London as fast as the train could
carry us, to report the calamity that had occurred to the 25
members of the Golden Mary. When that duty had been
performed, Captain Ravender went back to his own
house at Poplar, and I travelled to the West of England
to report myself to my old father and mother.

Here I might well end all these pages of writing; but 30
I cannot refrain from adding a few more sentences, to tell
the reader what I am sure he will be glad to hear. In
the summer-time of this present year eighteen hundred and
seventy-six, I happened to be at New York, and having spare
money on my hands, and spare cash in my pocket, I walked 35
one of the biggest and grandest of their ordinaries

- there, to have my dinner. I had hardly sat d
table, before who should I see opposite but Mrs. Atl
as bright-eyed and pretty as ever, with a gentle
her right hand, and on her left—another Golden
- 5 Her hair was a shade or two darker than the hai
poor little pet of past sad times; but in all other
the living child reminded me so strongly of the dea
I quite started at the first sight of her. I could
if I was to try, how happy we were after dinner,
- 10 much we had to say to each other. I was introd
Mrs. Atherfield's husband, and heard from him,
other things, that Miss Coleshaw was married to
sweetheart, who had fallen into misfortunes and
and whom she was determined to set right by givi
- 15 the great chance in life of getting a good wife. Th
settled in America, like Mr. and Mrs. Atherfield
last and the child being on their way, when I me
to visit a friend living in the northernmost part
States.
- 20 With the relation of this circumstance, and v
personal testimony to the good health and sp
Captain Ravender the last time I saw him, ends
I have to say in connection with the subject of the
of the Golden Mary, and the Great Deliverance
- 25 People at Sea.

RICHARD DOUBLEDICK

FROM THE SEVEN POOR TRAVELLERS

1199
In the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-
two, a relative of mine came limping down, on foot, to
the town of Chatham. I call it this town, because if
any body present knows to a nicety where Rochester ends
and Chatham begins, it is more than I do. He was a poor 5
fellow, with not a farthing in his pocket. He sat by the
fire in this very room, and he slept one night in a bed that
had been occupied to-night by some one here.

My relative came down to Chatham to enlist in a cavalry
regiment, if a cavalry regiment would have him; if not, to 10
get a King George's shilling from any corporal or serjeant,
who would put a bunch of ribbons in his hat. His object
was to get shot; but he thought he might as well ride to
war as be at the trouble of walking.

My relative's Christian name was Richard, but he was 15
better known as Dick. He dropped his own surname on
the road down, and took up that of Doubledick. He was
called as Richard Doubledick; age, twenty-two; height,
five foot ten; native place, Exmouth, which he had never
before been near in his life. There was no cavalry in Chatham 20
when he limped over the bridge here with half a shoe to
his lousy feet, so he enlisted into a regiment of the line and
was glad to get drunk and forget all about it.

You are to know that this relative of mine had gone
drunk, and run wild. His heart was in the right place, but 25
it was sealed up. He had been betrothed to a good and
beautiful girl, whom he had loved better than she—or per-
haps even he—believed; but in an evil hour he had given

her cause to say to him solemnly, "Richard, I will never marry another man. I will live single for your sake, but Mary Marshall's lips"—her name was Mary Marshall—"never address another word to you on earth. Go Richard! Heaven forgive you!" This finished him. This brought him down to Chatham. This made Private Richard Doubledick, with a determination to be shot.

There was not a more dissipated and reckless soldier in Chatham barracks, in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine, than Private Richard Doubledick. He associated with the dregs of every regiment; he was seldom sober as he could be, and was constantly under punishment. It became clear to the whole barracks that Private Richard Doubledick would very soon be flogged.

Now the Captain of Richard Doubledick's company was a young gentleman not above five years his senior, whose eyes had an expression in them which affected Private Richard Doubledick in a very remarkable way. They were bright, handsome, dark eyes,—what are called laughing eyes generally, and, when serious, rather steady than severe,—but they were the only eyes now left in his narrowed world that Private Richard Doubledick could understand. Unabashed by evil report and punishment, defiant of everything else and everybody else, he had but to know that those eyes looked at him for a moment, and he felt ashamed. He could not so much as salute Captain Taunton in the street like any other officer. He was reproached and confused,—troubled by the mere possibility of the captain's looking at him. In his worst moments, he would rather turn back, and go any distance out of his way, than encounter those two handsome, dark, bright eyes.

One day, when Private Richard Doubledick came out of the Black hole, where he had been passing the last eight and-forty hours, and in which retreat he spent a good

is time, he was ordered to betake himself to Captain nton's quarters. In the stale and squalid state of a man out of the Black hole, he had less fancy than ever for g seen by the captain; but he was not so mad yet as to obey orders, and consequently went up to the terrace 5 looking the parade-ground, where the officers' quarters ; twisting and breaking in his hands, as he went along, of the straw that had formed the decorative furniture e Black hole.

"Come in!" cried the Captain, when he knocked with 10 knuckles at the door. Private Richard Double- pulled off his cap, took a stride forward, and felt very cious that he stood in the light of the dark, bright

ere was a silent pause. Private Richard Double- 15 had put the straw in his mouth, and was gradually dling it up into his windpipe and choking himself.

"Doubledick," said the Captain, "do you know where are going to?"

"To the Devil, sir?" faltered Doubledick. 20

"Yes," returned the Captain. "And very fast."

ivate Richard Doubledick turned the straw of the k hole in his mouth, and made a miserable salute of iescence.

"Doubledick," said the Captain, "since I entered his 25 asty's service, a boy of seventeen, I have been pained e many men of promise going that road; but I have r been so pained to see a man determined to make shameful journey as I have been, ever since you d the regiment, to see you." 30

ivate Richard Doubledick began to find a film steal- over the floor at which he looked; also to find the legs e Captain's breakfast-table turning crooked, as if he them through water.

"I am only a common soldier, sir," said he. "It sig- 35 very little what such a poor brute comes to."

"You are a man," returned the Captain, with great indignation, "of education and superior advantages; and if you say that, meaning what you say, you have sunk lower than I had believed. How low that must be!"
5 I leave you to consider, knowing what I know of your disgrace, and seeing what I see."

"I hope to get shot soon, sir," said Private Richard Doubledick; "and then the regiment and the world together will be rid of me."

10 The legs of the table were becoming very crooked. Doubledick, looking up to steady his vision, met those that had so strong an influence over him. He put his head before his own eyes, and the breast of his disgrace jacket swelled as if it would fly asunder.

15 "I would rather," said the young Captain, "see this you, Doubledick, than I would see five thousand guineas counted out upon this table for a gift to my good mother. Have you a mother?"

"I am thankful to say she is dead, sir."

20 "If your praises," returned the Captain, "were spread from mouth to mouth through the whole regiment, through the whole army, through the whole country, I would wish she had lived to say, with pride and joy, 'This is my son!'"

25 "Spare me, sir," said Doubledick. "She would never have heard any good of me. She would never have had any pride and joy in owning herself my mother. Love and compassion she might have had, and would have always had, I know; but not—Spare me, sir! I am a
30 broken wretch, quite at your mercy!" And he turned his face to the wall, and stretched out his imploring hand.

"My friend—" began the Captain.

"God bless you, sir!" sobbed Private Richard Doubledick.

"You are at the crisis of your fate. Hold your

nged a little longer, and you know what must hap-
 I know even better than you can imagine, that,
 hat has happened, you are lost. No man who could
 hose tears could bear those marks."

fully believe it, sir," in a low, shivering voice said
 e Richard Doubledick.

it a man in any station can do his duty," said the
 Captain, "and, in doing it, can earn his own respect,
 f his case should be so very unfortunate and so very
 hat he can earn no other's man's. A common
 r, poor brute though you called him just now, has
 dvantage in the stormy times we live in, that he
 s does his duty before a host of sympathising wit-
 . Do you doubt that he may so do it as to be ex-
 through a whole regiment, through a whole army,
 h a whole country? Turn while you may yet re-
 the past, and try."

ill! I ask for only one witness, sir," cried Richard,
 bursting heart.

nderstand you. I will be a watchful and a faithful

ve heard from Private Richard Doubledick's own
 hat he dropped down upon his knee, kissed that
 's hand, arose, and went out of the light of the dark,
 eyes, an altered man.

hat year, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-
 the French were in Egypt, in Italy, in Germany,
 not? Napoleon Bonaparte had likewise begun to
 gainst us in India, and most men could read the
 of the great troubles that were coming on. In that
 next year, when we formed an alliance with Austria
 t him, Captain Taunton's regiment was on service
 ia. And there was not a finer non-commissioned
 in it,—no, nor in the whole line—than Corporal
 d Doubledick.

ghteen hundred and one, the Indian army were on

the coast of Egypt. Next year was the year of the proclamation of the short peace, and they were recalled. It had then become well known to thousands of men, that wherever Captain Taunton, with the dark, bright eyes, led there, close to him, ever at his side, firm as a rock, true as the sun, and brave as Mars, would be certain to be found while life beat in their hearts, that famous soldier, Serjeant Richard Doubledick.

Eighteen hundred and five, besides being the great year of Trafalgar, was a year of hard fighting in India. That year saw such wonders done by a Serjeant-Major, who cut his way single-handed through a solid mass of men, and recovered the colours of his regiment, which had been seized from the hand of a poor boy shot through the heart, and rescued his wounded Captain, who was down, and in very jungle of horses' hoofs and sabres,—saw such wonders done, I say, by this brave Serjeant-Major, that he was specially made the bearer of the colours he had won; and Ensign Richard Doubledick had risen from the ranks. Sorely cut up in every battle, but always reinforced by the bravest of men,—for the fame of following the colours, shot through and through, which Ensign Richard Doubledick had saved, inspired all breasts,—this regiment fought its way through the Peninsular war, up to the investment of Badajos in eighteen hundred and twelve. Again and again it had been cheered through the British ranks until the tears had sprung into men's eyes at the mere hearing of the mighty British voice, so exultant in their valour; and there was not a drummer-boy but knew the legend that wherever the two friends, Major Taunton with the dark bright eyes, and Ensign Richard Doubledick who was devoted to him, were seen to go, there the boldest spirits in the English army became wild to follow.

One day, at Badajos,—not in the great storming, but during a hot sally of the besieged upon our men at the trenches, who had given way,—the two officers to

themselves hurrying forward, face to face, against a party of French infantry, who made a stand. There was an officer at their head, encouraging his men,—a courageous, handsome, gallant officer of five-and-thirty, whom Doubledick saw hurriedly, almost momentarily, but saw well. He particularly noticed this officer waving his sword, and rallying his men with an eager and excited cry, when they fired in obedience to his gesture, and Major Taunton dropped.

It was over in ten minutes more, and Doubledick returned to the spot where he had laid the best friend man he had on a coat spread upon the wet clay. Major Taunton's uniform was opened at the breast, and on his breast were three little spots of blood.

"Dear Doubledick," said he, "I am dying."

"For the love of Heaven, no!" exclaimed the other, kneeling down beside him, and passing his arm round his neck to raise his head. "Taunton! My preserver, my guardian angel, my witness! Dearest, truest, kindest of human beings! Taunton! For God's sake!"

His bright, dark eyes—so very, very dark now, in the death face—smiled upon him; and the hand he had kissed sixteen years ago laid itself fondly on his breast.

"Write to my mother. You will see Home again. Tell her how we became friends. It will comfort her, as it comforts me."

He spoke no more, but faintly signed for a moment towards his hair as it fluttered in the wind. The Ensign understood him. He smiled again when he saw that, and, gently turning his face over on the supporting arm as if for a moment, died, with his hand upon the breast in which he had loved a soul.

No dry eye looked on Ensign Richard Doubledick that melancholy day. He buried his friend on the field, and became a lone bereaved man. Beyond his duty he appeared to have but two remaining cares in life,—one, to preserve the little packet of hair he was to give to Taun-

ton's mother: the other, to encounter that French officer who had rallied the men under whose fire Taunton fell. A new legend now began to circulate among our troops, and it was, that when he and the French officer came to face once more, there would be weeping in France.

The war went on—and through it went the exact picture of the French officer on the one side, and the reality upon the other—until the Battle of Toulouse fought. In the returns sent home appeared these words: “Severely wounded, but not dangerously, Lieutenant Richard Doubledick.”

At Midsummer-time, in the year eighteen hundred fourteen, Lieutenant Richard Doubledick, now a bold soldier, seven-and-thirty years of age, came home to land invalided. He brought the hair with him, near heart. Many a French officer had he seen since that many a dreadful night, in searching with men and terms for his wounded, had he relieved French of lying disabled; but the mental picture and the reality never come together.

Though he was weak and suffered pain, he lost no hour in getting down to Frome in Somersetshire, where Taunton's mother lived. In the sweet, compassionate words that naturally present themselves to the mind to a soldier, “he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.”

It was a Sunday evening, and the lady sat at her garden-window, reading the Bible; reading to herself with a trembling voice, that very passage in it, as I have told him tell. He heard the words: “Young man, I say unto thee, arise!”

He had to pass the window; and the bright, dark eyes of his debased time seemed to look at him. Her heart told her who he was; she came to the door quickly, and laid her hand upon his neck.

“He saved me from ruin, made me a human creature again.”

on me from infamy and shame. O, God for ever bless
n! As He will, He will!"

"He will!" the lady answered. "I know he is in Heaven!
then she piteously cried, "But O, my darling boy, my
rling boy!"

Never from the hour when Private Richard Doubledick
isted at Chatham had the Private, Corporal, Serjeant,
rjeant-Major, Ensign, or Lieutenant breathed his right
me, or the name of Mary Marshall, or a word of the
ry of his life, into any ear except his reclainer's. That
vious scene in his existence was closed. He had firmly
olved that his expiation should be to live unknown; to
turb no more the peace that had long grown over his old
ences; to let it be revealed, when he was dead, that he
d striven and suffered, and had never forgotten; and
en, if they could forgive him and believe him—well, it
ould be time enough—time enough!

But that night, remembering the words he had cherished
r two years, "Tell her how we became friends. It will
mfort her, as it comforts me," he related everything. It
adually seemed to him as if in his maturity he had recov-
ed a mother; it gradually seemed to her as if in her
reavement she had found a son. During his stay in
gland, the quiet garden into which he had slowly and
infully crept, a stranger, became the boundary of his
me; when he was able to rejoin his regiment in the
ring, he left the garden, thinking was this indeed the first
ne he had ever turned his face towards the old colours
th a woman's blessing!

He followed them—so ragged, so scarred and pierced
w, that they would scarcely hold together—to Quatre
as and Ligny. He stood beside them, in an awful still-
ss of many men, shadowy through the mist and drizzle
a wet June forenoon, on the field of Waterloo. And
wn to that hour the picture in his mind of the French
er had never been compared with the reality.

The father
and received its first
it was seen to fall. But
left behind it no such creat
as Lieutenant Richard D

Through pits of mire,
ditches, once roads, that
places by artillery, heavy
and the struggle of every
wounded soldiers; jolted
disfigured by blood and
for humanity; undisturbed

shocking of horses, while
passions of life, could not
living by the roadside,
with: dead, as to any
after. The form that
dead with whom you
passed. There is no
then a life, with all
no other, and the
no other, and the

it swept on
in the wa
bledick.

and pools o
were pound
wagons, tran
wheels; a
among the

ly laboring, at last, through a long heavy dream of
time and place, presenting faint glimpses of army
s whom he knew, and of faces that had been familiar
youth,—dearest and kindest among them, Mary
ll's with a solicitude upon it more like reality than
g he could discern,—Lieutenant Richard Double-
me back to life. To the beautiful life of a calm
evening sunset, to the peaceful life of a fresh quiet
with a large window standing open; a balcony be-
n which were moving leaves and sweet-smelling
; beyond, again, the clear sky, with the sun full in
ouring its golden radiance on his bed.

is so tranquil and so lovely that he thought he had
into another world. And he said in a faint voice,
ton, are you near me?"

He bent over him. Not his, his mother's.
me to nurse you. We have nursed you many weeks.
re moved here long ago. Do you remember noth-

hing."

His lady kissed his cheek, and held his hand, soothing

ere is the regiment? What has happened? Let
you mother. What has happened, mother?"
reat victory, dear. The war is over, and the regi-
as the bravest in the field."

His eyes kindled, his lips trembled, he sobbed, and the
in down his face. He was very weak, too weak to
his hand.

Is it dark just now?" he asked presently.

"Was only dark to me? Something passed away, like
a shadow. But as it went, and the sun—O blessed
how beautiful it is!—touched my face, I thought I saw
white cloud pass out at the door. Was there noth-
went out?"

She shook her head, and in a little while he fell asleep, she still holding his hand, and soothing him.

From that time he recovered. Slowly, for he had been desperately wounded in the head, and had been shot in the
5 body, but making some little advance every day. When he had gained sufficient strength to converse as he lay in bed, he soon began to remark that Mrs. Taunton always brought him back to his own history. Then he recalled his preserver's dying words, and thought, "It comforts her."
10 One day he woke out of a sleep, refreshed, and asked her to read to him. But the curtain of the bed, softening the light, which she always drew back when he awoke, that she might see him from her table at the bedside where she sat at work, was held undrawn; and a woman's voice spoke
15 which was not hers.

"Can you bear to see a stranger?" it said softly. "Would you like to see a stranger?"

"Stranger!" he repeated. The voice awoke old memories, before the days of Private Richard Doubledick.

20 "A stranger now, but not a stranger once," it said in tones that thrilled him. "Richard, dear Richard, lost through so many years, my name—"

He cried out her name, "Mary," and she held him in her arms, and his head lay on her bosom.

25 "I am not breaking a rash vow, Richard. These are not Mary Marshall's lips that speak. I have another name."

She was married.

"I have another name, Richard. Did you ever hear it?"

30 "Never!"

He looked into her face, so pensively beautiful, and wondered at the smile upon it through her tears.

"Think again, Richard. Are you sure you never heard my altered name?"

35 "Never!"

"Don't move your head to look at me, dear Richard"

Slowly laboring, at last, through a long heavy dream of confused time and place, presenting faint glimpses of army surgeons whom he knew, and of faces that had been familiar

his youth,—dearest and kindest among them, Mary Marshall's with a solicitude upon it more like reality than anything he could discern,—Lieutenant Richard Doubledick came back to life. To the beautiful life of a calm autumn evening sunset, to the peaceful life of a fresh quiet room with a large window standing open; a balcony beyond, in which were moving leaves and sweet-smelling flowers; beyond, again, the clear sky, with the sun full in sight, pouring its golden radiance on his bed.

It was so tranquil and so lovely that he thought he had passed into another world. And he said in a faint voice, "Fauntou, are you near me?"

A face bent over him. Not his, his mother's.

"I came to nurse you. We have nursed you many weeks. You were moved here long ago. Do you remember nothing?"

"Nothing."

The lady kissed his cheek, and held his hand, soothing him.

"Where is the regiment? What has happened? Let me call you mother. What has happened, mother?"

"A great victory, dear. The war is over, and the regiment was the bravest in the field."

His eyes kindled, his lips trembled, he sobbed, and the tears ran down his face. He was very weak, too weak to move his hand.

"Was it dark just now?" he asked presently.

"No."

"It was only dark to me? Something passed away, like a black shadow. But as it went, and the sun—O blessed sun, how beautiful it is!—touched my face, I thought I saw a light white cloud pass out at the door. Was there nothing that went out?"

then returned to England. Mrs. Taunton, growing old after three years—though not so old as that her bright dark eyes were dimmed—and remembering that her strength had been benefited by the change, resolved to go
 5 back for a year to those parts. So she went with a faithful servant, who had often carried her son in his arms; and she was to be rejoined and escorted home, at the year's end, by Captain Richard Doubledick.

She wrote regularly to her children (as she called them
 10 now), and they to her. She went to the neighbourhood of Aix; and there, in their own chateau near the farmer's house she rented, she grew into intimacy with a family belonging to that part of France. The intimacy began
 15 in her often meeting among the vineyards a pretty child, a girl with a most compassionate heart, who was never tired of listening to the solitary English lady's stories of her poor son and the cruel wars. The family were as gentle as the child, and at length she came to know them
 20 so well that she accepted their invitation to pass the last month of her residence abroad under their roof. All this intelligence she wrote home, piecemeal as it came about, from time to time; and at last enclosed a polite note
 25 from the head of the chateau, soliciting, on the occasion of his approaching mission to that neighbourhood, the honour of the company of cet homme si justement célèbre, Monsieur le Capitaine Richard Doubledick.

Captain Doubledick, now a hardy, handsome man in the full vigour of life, broader across the chest and shoulders
 30 than he had ever been before, despatched a courteous reply, and followed it in person. Travelling through all that extent of country after three years of Peace, he blessed the better days on which the world had fallen. The corn was golden, not drenched in unnatural red; was bound
in sheaves for food, not trodden underfoot by men in mortal
 35 *fight. The smoke rose up from peaceful hearths, not*
in ruins. The carts were laden with the fair fr

the earth, not with wounds and death. To him who had often seen the terrible reverse, these things were beautiful indeed; and they brought him in a softened spirit to the old chateau near Aix upon a deep blue evening.

It was a large chateau of the genuine old ghostly kind, with round towers, and extinguishers, and a high leaden roof, and more windows than Aladdin's Palace. The lattice blinds were all thrown open after the heat of the day, and there were glimpses of rambling walls and corridors within. Then there were immense out-buildings fallen into partial decay, masses of dark trees, terrace-gardens, balustrades; tanks of water, too weak to play and too dirty to work; statues, weeds, and thickets of iron railing that seemed to have overgrown themselves like the shrubberies, and to have branched out in all manner of wild shapes. The entrance doors stood open, as doors often do in that country when the heat of the day is past; and the Captain saw no bell or knocker, and walked in.

He walked into a lofty stone hall, refreshingly cool and gloomy after the glare of a Southern day's travel. Extending along the four sides of this hall was a gallery, leading to suites of rooms; and it was lighted from the top. Still no bell was to be seen.

"Faith," said the Captain halting, ashamed of the clanking of his boots, "this is a ghostly beginning!"

He started back, and felt his face turn white. In the gallery, looking down at him, stood the French officer—the officer whose picture he had carried in his mind so long and so far. Compared with the original, at last—in every lineament how like it was!

He moved, and disappeared, and Captain Richard Doubledick heard his steps coming quickly down into the hall. He entered through an archway. There was a bright, sudden look upon his face, much such a look as it had worn in that fatal moment.

Monsieur le Capitaine Richard Doubledick? I chanted to receive him! A thousand apologies! 7
servants were all out in the air. There was a little f
among them in the garden. In effect, it was the fête c
5 of my daughter, the little cherished and protected
Madame Taunton.

He was so gracious and so frank that Monsieur
Capitaine Richard Doubledick could not withhold
hand. "It is the hand of a brave Englishman," said
10 French officer, retaining it while he spoke. "I co
respect a brave Englishman, even as my foe, how mu
more as my friend! I also am a soldier."

"He has not remembered me, as I have remember
him; he did not take such note of my face, that day,
15 I took of his," thought Captain Richard Doubledick
"How shall I tell him?"

The French officer conducted his guest into a garden
and presented him to his wife, an engaging and beautiful
woman, sitting with Mrs. Taunton in a whimsical o
20 fashioned pavilion. His daughter, her fair young face
beaming with joy, came running to embrace him; and
there was a boy-baby to tumble down among the orange
trees on the broad steps, in making for his father's leg.
A multitude of children visitors were dancing to sprightly
25 music; and all the servants and peasants about the chateau
were dancing too. It was a scene of innocent happiness
that might have been invented for the climax of the scene
of peace which had soothed the Captain's journey.

He looked on, greatly troubled in his mind, until
30 resounding bell rang, and the French officer begged to
show him his rooms. They went up-stairs into the
gallery from which the officer had looked down; and
Monsieur le Capitaine Richard Doubledick was cordially
welcomed to a grand outer chamber, and a smaller one
, all clocks and draperies, and hearths, and brass

and tiles, and cool devices, and elegance, and vast-

"You were at Waterloo," said the French officer.

"Yes," said Captain Richard Doubledick. "And at
Tos."

5
He sat alone with the sound of his own stern voice in his
he sat down to consider, What shall I do, and how
I tell him? At that time, unhappily, many deplor-
duels had been fought between English and French
rs, arising out of the recent war; and these duels, 10
now to avoid this officer's hospitality, were the upper-
thought in Captain Richard Doubledick's mind.

He was thinking, and letting the time run out in which
he would have dressed for dinner, when Mrs. Taunton
came to him outside the door, asking if he could give her 15
a letter he had brought from Mary. "His mother,
and all," the Captain thought. "How shall I tell *her*?"
"You will form a friendship with your host, I hope,"
Mrs. Taunton, whom he hurriedly admitted, "that
last for life. He is so true-hearted and so generous, 20
and, that you can hardly fail to esteem one another.
He had been spared," she kissed (not without tears)
the pocket in which she wore his hair, "he would have
rejoiced him with his own magnanimity, and would
have been truly happy that the evil days were past which 25
such a man his enemy."

He left the room; and the Captain walked, first to one
window, whence he could see the dancing in the garden,
to another window, whence he could see the smiling
sunset and the peaceful vineyards. 30

"Spirit of my departed friend," said he, "is it through
these better thoughts are rising in my mind? Is it
who hast shown me, all the way I have been drawn
to meet this man, the blessings of the altered time? Is it
who has sent thy stricken mother to me, to stay my 35
hand? Is it from thee the whisper comes, that

this man did his duty as thou didst,—and as I did, through thy guidance, which has wholly saved me here on earth—and that he did no more?”

He sat down, with his head buried in his hands, and when he rose up, made the second strong resolution of his life,—that neither to the French officer, nor to the mother of his departed friend, nor to any soul, while either of the two was living, would he breathe what only he knew. And when he touched that French officer's glove with his own, that day at dinner, he secretly forgave him in the name of the Divine Forgiver of injuries.

Here I ended my story as the first Poor Traveller. But, if I had told it now, I could have added that the time has since come when the son of Major Richard Doubledick, and the son of that French officer, friends as their fathers were before them, fought side by side in one camp with their respective nations, like long-divided brothers whom the better times have brought together, fast united.

THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH

CHIRP THE FIRST

E kettle began it! Don't tell me what Mrs. Peery-
said. I know better. Mrs. Peerybingle may leave
record to the end of time that she couldn't say which
one began it; but, I say the Kettle did. I ought to
I hope? The Kettle began it, full five minutes by
the waxy-faced Dutch clock in the corner before the
it uttered a chirp.

if the clock hadn't finished striking, and the convul-
sive Haymaker at the top of it, jerking away right and
with a scythe in front of a Moorish Palace, hadn't
d down half an acre of imaginary grass before the
it joined in at all!

y, I am not naturally positive. Every one knows
I wouldn't set my own opinion against the opinion
rs. Peerybingle, unless I were quite sure, on any
nt whatever. Nothing should induce me. But this
restion of fact. And the fact is, that the Kettle began
least five minutes before the Cricket gave any sign
ng in existence. Contradict me: and I'll say ten.

me narrate exactly how it happened. I should have
ded to do so, in my very first word, but for this plain
leration—if I am to tell a story I must begin at the
ning; and how is it possible to begin at the beginning,
ut beginning at the Kettle?

appeared as if there were a sort of match, or trial of
you must understand, between the Kettle and the
et. And this is what led to it, and how it came

Mrs. Peerybingle, going out into the raw twilight, clicking over the wet stones in a pair of patten-worked innumerable rough impressions of the friction in Euclid all about the yard—Mrs. Peerybingle filled the Kettle at the water-butt. Presently, regardless of the pattens: and a good deal less, for they were Mrs. Peerybingle was but short; she set the Kettle on fire. In doing which she lost her temper, or mislaid it in an instant; for, the water—being uncomfortable and in that slippery, slushy, sleety sort of state which seems to penetrate through every kind of substance—rings included—had laid hold of Mrs. Peerybingle and even splashed her legs. And when we rather than ourselves (with reason too) upon our legs, and knees, and elbows particularly neat in point of stockings, we find it for the moment, hard to bear.

Besides, the Kettle was aggravating and obstinate; it wouldn't allow itself to be adjusted on the top of the hearth; it wouldn't hear of accommodating itself kindly to the fire of coal; it would lean forward with a drunken gait, dribble, a very Idiot of a Kettle, on the hearth. It was quarrelsome; and hissed and sputtered morosely at Mrs. Peerybingle. To sum up all, the lid, resisting Mrs. Peerybingle's first of all turned topsy-turvy, and then, with an impatient pertinacity (deserving of a better cause,) dived sideways down to the very bottom of the Kettle. And the hissing Royal George has never made half the monstrous resistance to coming out of the water, which the lid of the Kettle employed against Mrs. Peerybingle, before she got it up again.

It looked sullen and pig-headed enough, even when carrying its handle with an air of defiance, and could spit pertly and mockingly at Mrs. Peerybingle, and said, "I won't boil. Nothing shall induce me!"

But Mrs. Peerybingle, with restored good spirits, pressed her chubby little hands against each other

n before the Kettle: laughing. Meantime, the jolly
 e uprose and fell, flashing and gleaming on the little
 maker at the top of the Dutch clock, until one might
 e thought he stood stock still before the Moorish
 ice, and nothing was in motion but the flame.

5

le was on the move, however; and had his spasms, two
 he second, all right and regular. But his sufferings
 n the clock was going to strike, were frightful to behold;

when a Cuckoo looked out of a trap-door in the
 ace, and gave note six times, it shook him, each time,
 a spectral voice—or like a something wiry, plucking
 is legs.

10

was not until a violent commotion and a whirring
 e among the weights and ropes below him had quite
 sided, that this terrified Haymaker became himself
 n. —Nor was he startled without reason; for these
 ling, bony skeletons of clocks are very disconcerting
 heir operation, and I wonder very much how any set of
 t, but most of all how Dutchmen, can have had a liking
 vent them. For there is a popular belief that Dutch-
 love broad cases and much clothing for their own
 er selves; and they might know better than to leave
 r clocks so very lank and unprotected, surely.

15

20

ow it was, you observe, that the Kettle began to spend
 evening. Now it was, that the Kettle, growing mel-
 and musical, began to have irrepressible gurglings in
 hroat, and to indulge in short vocal snorts, which it
 ked in the bud, as if it hadn't quite made up its mind
 to be good company. Now it was, that after two or
 e such vain attempts to stifle its convivial sentiments,
 rew off all moroseness, all reserve, and burst into a
 am of song so cosy and hilarious, as never maudlin
 atingale yet formed the least idea of.

25

30

o plain, too! Bless you, you might have understood it
 a book—better than some books you and I could name,
 aps. With its warm breath gushing forth in a light

35

cloud which merrily and gracefully ascended a few feet then hung about the chimney-corner as its own domestic Heaven, it trolled its song with that strong energy of cheerfulness, that its iron body hummed and stirred upon the
 5 fire; and the lid itself, the recently rebellious lid—such is the influence of a bright example—performed a sort of jig, and clattered like a deaf and dumb young cymbal that had never known the use of its twin brother.

That this song of the Kettle's was a song of invitation and
 10 welcome to somebody out of doors; to somebody at that moment coming on, towards the snug small home and the crisp fire; there is no doubt whatever. Mrs. Peerybingle knew it, perfectly, as she sat musing, before the hearth. It's a dark night, sang the Kettle, and the rotten leaves are
 15 lying by the way; and above, all is mist and darkness, and below, all is mire and clay; and there's only one relief in all the sad and murky air; and I don't know that it is one, for it's nothing but a glare, of deep and angry crimson, when the sun and wind together set a brand upon the clouds for
 20 being guilty of such weather; and the widest open country is a long dull streak of black; and there's hoar-frost on the finger-post, and thaw upon the track; and the ice it isn't water, and the water isn't free; and you couldn't say that anything is what it ought to be; but he's coming, coming
 25 coming!—

And here, if you like, the Cricket DID chime in! with a Chirrup, Chirrup, Chirrup of such magnitude, by way of chorus; with a voice so astoundingly disproportionate to its size, as compared with the Kettle; (size! you couldn't
 30 see it!) that if it had then and there burst itself like an overcharged gun: if it had fallen a victim on the spot, and chirruped its little body into fifty pieces: it would have seemed a natural and inevitable consequence, for which it had expressly laboured.

35 *The Kettle had had the last of its solo performance. It persevered with undiminished ardour; but the Cricket too*

ble and kept it. Good Heaven, how it chirped! All, sharp, piercing voice resounded through the and seemed to twinkle in the outer darkness like a There was an indescribable little trill and tremble in s loudest, which suggested its being carried off its and made to leap again, by its own intense enthusi- Yet they went very well together, the Cricket and ttle. The burden of the song was still the same; ader, louder, louder still, they sang it in their emu-

fair little listener—for fair she was, and young: a something of what is called the dumpling shape; don't myself object to that—lighted a candle; d at the Haymaker on the top of the clock, who was g in a pretty average crop of minutes; and looked out 15 window, where she saw nothing, owing to the dark- out her own face imaged in the glass. And my opin- (and so would yours have been), that she might have d a long way, and seen nothing half so agreeable. she came back, and sat down in her former seat, the 20 et and the Kettle were still keeping it up, with a per- ury of competition. The Kettle's weak side clearly that he didn't know when he was beat.

ere was all the excitement of a race about it. Chirp, , chirp! Cricket a mile ahead. Hum, hum, hum— 25 n! Kettle making play in the distance, like a great Chirp, chirp, chirp! Cricket round the corner. , hum, hum—m—m! Kettle sticking to him in his way; no idea of giving in. Chirp, chirp, chirp! et fresher than ever. Hum, hum, hum—m—m! 30 e slow and steady. Chirp, chirp, chirp! Cricket in to finish him. Hum, hum, hum—m—m! Kettle o be finished. Until at last, they got jumbled together, e hurry-scurry, helter-skelter, of the match, that her the Kettle chirped and the Cricket hummed, or 35 ricket chirped and the Kettle hummed, or they both

chirped and both hummed, it would have taken a clearer head than yours or mine to have decided with anything like certainty. But of this there is no doubt: that the Kettle and the Cricket, at one and the same moment, and
5 by some power of amalgamation best known to themselves, sent, each, his fireside song of comfort streaming into a ray of the candle that shone out through the window; and a long way down the lane. And this light, bursting on a certain person who, on the instant, approached towards it
10 through the gloom, expressed the whole thing to him, literally in a twinkling, and cried, "Welcome home, old fellow! Welcome home, my Boy!"

This end attained, the Kettle, being dead beat, boiled over, and was taken off the fire. Mrs. Peerybingle then
15 went running to the door, where, what with the wheels of a cart, the tramp of a horse, the voice of a man, the tearing in and out of an excited dog, and the surprising and mysterious appearance of a Baby, there was soon the very
What's-his-name to pay.

20 Where the Baby came from, or how Mrs. Peerybingle got hold of it in that flash of time, I don't know. But a live Baby there was, in Mrs. Peerybingle's arms; and a pretty tolerable amount of pride she seemed to have in it, when she was drawn gently to the fire, by a sturdy figure
25 of a man, much taller and much older than herself; who had to stoop a long way down, to kiss her. But she was worth the trouble. Six foot six, with the lumbago, might have done it.

"Oh goodness, John!" said Mrs. P. "What a state
30 you're in with the weather!"

He was something the worse for it, undeniably. The thick mist hung in clots upon his eyelashes like candied
thaw; and between the fog and fire together, there were
rainbows in his very whiskers.

35 "Why, you see, Dot," John made answer, slowly, as he unrolled a shawl from about his throat; and warmed

his hands; "it—it an't exactly summer weather. So, no wonder."

"I wish you wouldn't call me Dot, John. I don't like it," said Mrs. Peerybingle: pouting in a way that clearly showed she *did* like it, very much. 5

"Why, what else are you?" returned John, looking down upon her with a smile, and giving her waist as light a squeeze as his huge hand and arm could give. "A dot and"—here he glanced at the Baby—"a dot and carry—I won't say it, for fear I should spoil it; but I was very near a joke. 10 I don't know as ever I was nearer."

He was often near to something or other very clever, by his own account: this lumbering, slow, honest John; this John so heavy, but so light of spirit; so rough upon the surface, but so gentle at the core; so dull without, so quick 15 within, so stolid, but so good! Oh Mother Nature, give thy children the true Poetry of Heart that hid itself in this poor Carrier's breast—he was but a Carrier by the way—and we can bear to have them talking Prose, and leading lives of Prose; and bear to bless Thee for their company! 20

It was pleasant to see Dot, with her little figure and her Baby in her arms: a very doll of a Baby: glancing with a coquettish thoughtfulness at the fire, and inclining her delicate little head just enough on one side to let it rest in an odd, half-natural, half-affected, wholly nestling and 25 agreeable manner, on the great rugged figure of the Carrier. It was pleasant to see him, with his tender awkwardness, endeavoring to adapt his rude support to her slight need, and make his burly middle-age a leaning-staff not inappropriate to her blooming youth. It was pleasant to 30 observe how Tilly Slowboy, waiting in the background for the Baby, took special cognizance (though in her earliest teens) of this grouping; and stood with her mouth and eyes wide open, and her head thrust forward, taking it in as if it were air. Nor was it less agreeable to observe how John 35 the Carrier, reference being made by Dot to the aforesaid

Baby, checked his hand when on the point of touching infant, as if he thought he might crack it; and ben
 down, surveyed it from a safe distance, with a kind of
 zled pride: such as an amiable mastiff might be supp
 5 to show, if he found himself, one day, the father of a y
 canary.

"An't he beautiful, John? Don't he look preciou
 his sleep?"

"Very precious," said John. "Very much so. He
 10 erally is asleep, an't he?"

"Lor, John! Good gracious, no!"

"Oh," said John, pondering. "I thought his eyes
 generally shut. Halloa!"

"Goodness, John, how you startle one!"

15 "It an't right for him to turn 'em up in that way!"
 the astonished Carrier, "is it? See how he's winking
 both of 'em at once! And look at his mouth! why,
 gasping like a gold and silver fish!"

"You don't deserve to be a father, you don't," said
 20 with all the dignity of an experienced matron. "But
 should you know what little complaints children
 troubled with, John! You wouldn't so much as k
 their names, you stupid fellow." And when she
 turned the Baby over on her left arm and had slappe
 25 back as a restorative, she pinched her husband's
 laughing.

"No," said John, pulling off his outer coat. "It's
 true, Dot. I don't know much about it. I only k
 that I've been fighting pretty stiffly with the Wind to-n
 30 Its been blowing north-east, straight into the cart
 whole way home."

"Poor old man, so it has!" cried Mrs. Peerybingle
 stantly becoming very active. "Here! Take the prec
darling, Tilly, while I make myself of some use. Ble
 35 *I could smother it with kissing it, I could! Hie then,*
dog! Hie Boxer, boy! Only let me make the te

nd then I'll help you with the parcels, like a busy
low doth the little'—and all the rest of it, you know,
Did you ever learn 'how doth the little,' when you
school, John?"

to quite know it," John returned. "I was very 5
nce. But I should only have spoilt it, I dare say."
ha!" laughed Dot. She had the blithest little
ou ever heard. "What a dear old darling of a
ou are, John, to be sure!"

at all disputing this position, John went out to see 10
boy with the lantern, which had been dancing to
before the door and window, like a Will of the
ok due care of the horse; who was fatter than
ld quite believe, if I gave you his measure, and so
his birthday was lost in the mists of antiquity. 15
eeling that his attentions were due to the family
al, and must be impartially distributed, dashed
out with bewildering inconstancy; now describing
of short barks round the horse, where he was being
down at the stable-door; now feigning to make 20
rushes at his mistress, and facetiously bringing
to sudden stops; now eliciting a shriek from
owboy, in the low nursing-chair near the fire,
unexpected application of his moist nose to her
ance; now exhibiting an obtrusive interest in the 25
ow going round and round upon the hearth, and
wn as if he had established himself for the night;
ing up again, and taking that nothing of a fag-end
of his, out into the weather, as if he had just
ered an appointment, and was off, at a round 30
leep it.

re! 'There's the teapot, ready on the hob!'
t; as briskly busy as a child at play at keeping
"And there's the cold knuckle of ham; and
he butter; and there's the crusty loaf, and all! 35
e clothes-basket for the small parcels, John, if

you've got any there—where are you, John? Don't let the dear child fall under the grate, Tilly, whatever you do!"

It may be noted of Miss Slowboy, in spite of her rejecting
5 the caution with some vivacity, that she had a rare and surprising talent for getting this Baby into difficulties; and had several times imperilled its short life, in a quiet way peculiarly her own. She was of a spare and straight shape, this young lady, insomuch that her garments
10 appeared to be in constant danger of sliding off those sharp pegs, her shoulders, on which they were loosely hung. Her costume was remarkable for the partial development, on all possible occasions, of some flannel vestment of a singular structure; also for affording
15 glimpses, in the region of the back, of a corset, or pair of stays, in colour a dead-green. Being always in a state of gaping admiration at everything, and absorbed, besides, in the perpetual contemplation of her mistress's perfection and the Baby's, Miss Slowboy, in her little errors of
20 judgment, may be said to have done equal honour to her head and to her heart; and though these did less honour to the Baby's head, which they were the occasional means of bringing into contact with deal doors, dressers, stair-rails, bedposts, and other foreign substances, still they
25 were the honest results of Tilly Slowboy's constant astonishment at finding herself so kindly treated, and installed in such a comfortable home. For, the maternal and paternal Slowboy were alike unknown to Fame, and Tilly had been bred by public charity, a Foundling;
30 which word, though only differing from Fondling by one vowel's length, is very different in meaning, and expresses quite another thing.

To have seen little Mrs. Peerybingle come back with her husband; tugging at the clothes-basket, and making most strenuous exertions to do nothing at all (for he
l it); would have amused you, almost as much as

ed him. It may have entertained the Cricket too, thing I know; but certainly, it now began to chirp vehemently.

day!" said John, in his slow way. "It's merrier, to-night, I think."

it's sure to bring us good fortune, John! It has done so. To have a Cricket on the Hearth, ckiest thing in all the world!"

looked at her as if he had very nearly got the into his head, that she was his Cricket in chief, quite agreed with her. But it was probably one arrow escapes, for he said nothing.

first time I heard its cheerful little note, John, that night when you brought me home—when ught me to my new home here; its little mistress. a year ago. You recollect, John?"

es. John remembered. I should think so! chirp was such a welcome to me! It seemed so full ise and encouragement. It seemed to say you e kind and gentle with me, and would not expect fear of that, John, then) to find an old head on ilders of your foolish little wife."

thoughtfully patted one of the shoulders, and then d, as though he would have said No, no; he had such expectation; he had been quite content to em as they were. And really he had reason. ere very comely.

ooke the truth, John, when it seemed to say so; have ever been, I am sure, the best, the most ate, the most affectionate of husbands to me. as been a happy home, John; and I love the for its sake!"

, so do I, then," said the Carrier. "So do I,

re it for the many times I have heard it, and the oughts its harmless music has given me. Some-

times, in the twilight, when I felt a little solitary and down-hearted, John—before Baby was here to keep me company and make the house gay—when I have thought how lonely you would be if I should die; how lonely I should be if I could know that you had lost me, dear; its Chirp, Chirp, Chirp upon the hearth, has seemed to tell me of another little voice, so sweet, so very dear to me, before whose coming sound my trouble vanished like a dream. And when I used to fear—I did fear once, John; I was very young you know—that ours might prove to be an ill-assorted marriage: I being such a child, and you more like my guardian than my husband: and that you might not, however hard you tried, be able to learn to love me, as you hoped and prayed you might; its Chirp, Chirp, Chirp has cheered me up again, and filled me with new trust and confidence. I was thinking of these things to-night, dear, when I sat expecting you; and I love the Cricket for their sake!”

“And so do I,” repeated John. “But, Dot? I hope and pray that I might learn to love you? How you talk! I had learnt that, long before I brought you here, to be the Cricket’s little mistress, Dot!”

She laid her hand, an instant, on his arm, and looked up at him with an agitated face, as if she would have told him something. Next moment she was down upon her knees before the basket; speaking in a sprightly voice, and busy with the parcels.

“There are not many of them to-night, John, but I saw some goods behind the cart, just now; and though they give more trouble, perhaps, still they pay as well; so we have no reason to grumble, have we? Besides, you have been delivering, I dare say, as you came along?”

“Oh yes,” John said. “A good many.”

“Why, what’s this round box? Heart alive, John, it’s a wedding-cake!”

“Leave a woman alone to find out that,” said John.

ngly. "Now a man would never have thought of hereas, it's my belief that if you was to pack a g-cake up in a tea-chest, or a turn-up bedstead, ckled salmon keg, or any unlikely thing, a woman be sure to find it out directly. Yes; I called for it 5
pastry-cook's."

nd it weighs I don't know what—whole hundred s!" cried Dot, making a great demonstration of to lift it. "Whose is it, John? Where is it going?" ad the writing on the other side," said John. 10

y, John! My Goodness, John!"

l who'd have thought it!" John returned.

u never mean to say," pursued Dot, sitting on the nd shaking her head at him, "that it's Gruff and ton the toymaker!" 15

l nodded.

Peerybingle nodded also, fifty times at least. Not nt—in dumb and pitying amazement; screwing up s the while, with all their little force (they were never or screwing up; I am clear of that), and looking the 20 Carrier through and through, in her abstraction. Slowboy, in the meantime, who had a mechanical of reproducing scraps of current conversation : delectation of the Baby, with all the sense struck them, and all the nouns changed into the plural 25 r, inquired aloud of that young creature, Was fs and Tackletons the toymakers then, and Would at Pastry-cooks for wedding-cakes, and Did its s know the boxes when its fathers brought them ; and so on.

d that is really to come about!" said Dot. "Why, d I were girls at school together, John." 30

night have been thinking of her: or nearly thinking , perhaps: as she was in that same school time. ked upon her with a thoughtful pleasure, but he 35
o answer.

"And he's as old! As unlike her!—Why, how many years older than you, is Gruff and Tackleton, John?"

"How many more cups of tea shall I drink to-night one sitting, than Gruff and Tackleton ever took in 5 I wonder!" replied John, good-humouredly, as he took a chair to the round table, and began at the cold "As to eating, I eat but little; but that little I enjoy, I

Even this; his usual sentiment at meal times, one of his innocent delusions (for his appetite was always obstinate 10 and flatly contradicted him); awoke no smile in the face of his little wife, who stood among the parcels, pushed the cake-box slowly from her with her foot, and once looked, though her eyes were cast down too, at the dainty shoe she generally was so mindful of. Absent 15 in thought, she stood there, heedless alike of the tea John (although he called to her, and rapped the table with his knife to startle her), until he rose and took her on the arm; when she looked at him for a moment hurried to her place behind the teaboard, laughing at 20 negligence. But not as she had laughed before. Her manner and the music were quite changed.

The Cricket, too, had stopped. Somehow the room was not so cheerful as it had been. Nothing like it.

"So these are all the parcels, are they, John?" said Carrie, breaking a long silence, which the honest Carrie devoted to the practical illustration of one part of her favourite sentiment—certainly enjoying what he ate 25 it couldn't be admitted that he ate but little. "So these are all the parcels; are they, John?"

30 "That's all," said John. "Why—no—I—" He laid down his knife and fork, and taking a long breath declared—I've clean forgotten the old gentleman!"

"The old gentleman?"

"In the cart," said John. "He was asleep, among the straw, the last time I saw him. I've very nearly 35 lost sight of him, twice, since I came in; but he went out

gain. Holloa! Yahip there! Rouse up! That's arty?"

He said these latter words outside the door, whither he hurried with the candle in his hand.

Slowboy, conscious of some mysterious reference to Old Gentleman, and connecting in her mystified imagination certain associations of a religious nature with the phrase, was so disturbed, that hastily rising from her chair by the fire to seek protection near the skirts of the mistress, and coming into contact as she crossed the way with an ancient Stranger, she instinctively made her nose or butt at him with the only offensive instrument within her reach. This instrument happening to be the great commotion and alarm ensued, which the activity of Boxer rather tended to increase; for that dog, more thoughtful than its master, had, it seemed, been watching the old gentleman in his sleep lest he should fall off with a few young poplar trees that were tied up behind the cart; and he still attended on him very closely; pulling his gaiters in fact, and making dead sets at the

"You're such an undeniable good sleeper, Sir," said the Carrier when tranquillity was restored; in the meantime the old gentleman had stood, bareheaded and motionless, in the centre of the room; "that I have half a mind to ask you the other six are: only that would be a joke, and I should spoil it. Very near though," murmured the Carrier, with a chuckle; "very near!"

The Stranger, who had long white hair; good features, very bold and well defined for an old man; and dark, penetrating eyes; looked round with a smile, and addressed the Carrier's wife by gravely inclining his head.

His garb was very quaint and odd—a long, long way from the time. Its hue was brown, all over. In his hand he held a great brown club or walking-stick; and strik-

ing this upon the floor, it fell asunder, and became a chair. On which he sat down, quite composedly.

"There!" said the Carrier, turning to his wife. "That's the way I found him, sitting by the roadside! Upright as a milestone. And almost as deaf."

"Sitting in the open air, John!"

"In the open air," replied the Carrier, "just at dusk. 'Carriage Paid,' he said; and gave me eighteenpence. Then he got in. And there he is."

10 "He's going, John, I think!"

Not at all. He was only going to speak.

"If you please, I was to be left till called for," said the Stranger, mildly. "Don't mind me."

With that he took a pair of spectacles from one of his large pockets, and a book from another, and leisurely began to read. Making no more of Boxer than if he had been a house lamb!

The Carrier and his wife exchanged a look of perplexity. The Stranger raised his head; and glancing from the latter to the former, said:

"Your daughter, my good friend?"

"Wife," returned John.

"Niece?" said the Stranger.

"Wife," roared John.

25 "Indeed?" observed the Stranger. "Surely? Very young?"

He quietly turned over and resumed his reading. Before he could have read two lines, he again interrupted himself to say:

30 "Baby, yours?"

John gave him a gigantic nod; equivalent to an answer in the affirmative, delivered through a speaking-trumpet.

"Girl?"

"B-o-o-oy!" roared John.

35 "Also very young, eh?"

Mrs. Peerybingle instantly struck in. "Two more

three da-ays! Vaccinated just six weeks ago-o! Took fine-ly! Considered, by the doctor, a remarkably utiful chi-ild! Equal to the general run of children ive months o-old! Takes notice, in a way quite wonful! May seem impossible to you, but feels his legs eady!"

ere the breathless little mother, who had been shriek-these short sentences into the old man's ear, until her ty face was crimsoned, held up the Baby before him stubborn and triumphant fact; while Tilly Slowboy, a melodious cry of "Ketcher, Ketcher"—which ided like some unknown words, adapted to a popular eze—performed some cow-like gambols round that all-onscious Innocent.

Hark! He's called for, sure enough," said John. ere's somebody at the door. Open it, Tilly."

efore she could reach it, however, it was opened from out; being a primitive sort of door, with a latch, that one could lift if he chose—and a good many people did ose, I can tell you; for all kinds of neighbours liked to e a cheerful word or two with the Carrier, though he no great talker himself. Being opened, it gave ad-sion to a little meagre, thoughtful dingy-faced man, seemed to have made himself a great-coat from the -cloth covering of some old box; for when he turned to the door, and keep the weather out, he disclosed upon back of that garment, the inscription G & T in large k capitals. Also the word GLASS in bold characters. Good evening, John!" said the little man. "Good ing, Mum. Good evening, Tilly. Good evening, eknown! How's Baby, Mum? Boxer's pretty well pe?"

All thriving, Caleb," replied Dot. "I am sure you l only to look at the dear child, for one, to know that." *And I'm sure I need only look at you for another," said*

He didn't look at her though; he had a wandering and thoughtful eye which seemed to be always projecting itself into some other time and place, no matter what he said; a description which will equally apply to his voice.

- 5 "Or at John for another," said Caleb. "Or at Tilly, as far as that goes. Or certainly at Boxer."

"Busy just now, Caleb?" asked the Carrier.

- "Why, pretty well, John," he returned, with the distraught air of a man who was casting about for the Philosopher's stone, at least. "Pretty much so. There's rather a run on Noah's Arks at present. I could have wished to improve upon the Family, but I don't see how it's to be done at the price. It would be a satisfaction to one's mind, to make it clearer which was Shems and Hams, and which
15 was Wives. Flies an't on that scale neither, as compared with elephants you know! Ah! well! Have you got anything in the parcel line for me, John?"

- The Carrier put his hand into a pocket of the coat he had taken off; and brought out, carefully preserved in moss and
20 paper, a tiny flower-pot.

"There it is!" he said, adjusting it with great care.

"Not so much as a leaf damaged. Full of buds!"

Caleb's dull eye brightened, as he took it, and thanked him.

- 25 "Dear, Caleb," said the Carrier. "Very dear at this season."

"Never mind that. It would be cheap to me, whatever it cost," returned the little man. "Anything else, John?"

"A small box," replied the Carrier. "Here you are!"

- 30 "'For Caleb Plummer,'" said the little man, spelling out the direction. "'With Cash.' With Cash, John. I don't think it's for me."

"With Care," returned the Carrier, looking over his shoulder. "Where do you make out cash?"

"Oh! To be sure!" said Caleb. "It's all right. With

Yes, yes; that's mine. It might have been with

indeed, if my dear Boy in the Golden South Americas lived, John. You loved him like a son; didn't you? needn't say you did. I know, of course. 'Caleb nmer. With care.' Yes, yes, it's all right. It's a of dolls' eyes for my daughter's work. I wish it was 5 own sight in a box, John."

"I wish it was, or could be!" cried the Carrier.

"Thank'ee," said the little man. "You speak very ty. To think that she should never see the Dolls— them a-staring at her, so bold, all day long! That's 10 re it cuts. What's the damage, John?"

"All damage you," said John, "if you inquire. Dot! 'near?"

"Well! it's like you to say so," observed the little man. "your kind way. Let me see. I think that's all." 15 "I think not," said the Carrier. "Try again."

"Something for our Governor, eh?" said Caleb, after lering a little while. "To be sure. That's what I came but my head's so running on them Arks and things! 20 asn't been here, has he?"

"Not he," returned the Carrier. "He's too busy, ting."

"He's coming round though," said Caleb; "for he told o keep on the near side of the road going home, and it ten to one he'd take me up. I had better go, by the 25 —You couldn't have the goodness to let me pinch er's tail, Mum, for half a moment, could you?"

"Why, Caleb! what a question!"

"Oh, never mind, Mum," said the little man. "He tn't like it perhaps. There's a small order just come 30 or barking dogs; and I should wish to go as close to ur' as I could, for sixpence. That's all. Never mind, l."

happened opportunely, that Boxer, without receiving roposed stimulus, began to bark with great zeal. But 35 i implied the approach of some new visitor, Caleb,

postponing his study from the life to a more convenient season, shouldered the round box, and took a hurried departure. He might have spared himself the trouble, for his visitor upon the threshold.

5 "Oh! You are here, are you? Wait a bit. I'll bring you home. John Peerybingle, my service to you. I'll do my service to your pretty wife. Handsomer even than mine. Better too, if possible! And younger," mused the visitor in a low voice; "that's the Devil of it!"

10 "I should be astonished at your paying company to Mr. Tackleton," said Dot, not with the best grace in the world; "but for your condition."

"You know all about it then?"

"I have got myself to believe it, somehow," said

15 "After a hard struggle, I suppose?"

"Very."

Tackleton the Toy-merchant, pretty generally known as Gruff and Tackleton—for that was the firm, though he had been bought out long ago; only leaving his name as some said his nature, according to its Dictionary in the business—Tackleton the Toy-merchant, whose vocation had been quite misunderstood by his creditors and Guardians. If they had made him a Lender, or a sharp Attorney, or a Sheriff's Officer, or a Broker, he might have sown his discontented seed in youth, and, after having had the full run of himself in such natured transactions, might have turned out another man at last, for the sake of a little freshness and novelty. As it was, cramped and chafing in the peaceable pursuit of toys, he was a domestic Ogre, who had been living on his own all his life, and was their implacable enemy. He would not buy all his toys; wouldn't have bought one for the world; did not do so in his malice, to insinuate grim expressions into the *brown-paper* farmers who drove pigs to market, *nor* who advertised lost lawyers' consciences, *nor* who darned stockings or carved pies; and

s of his stock in trade. In appalling masks; hideous red-eyed Jacks in Boxes; Vampire Kites; demoniacal lers who wouldn't lie down, and were perpetually forward, to stare infants out of countenance; his soul ly revelled. They were his only relief, and safety- 5

He was great in such inventions. Anything sug- of a Pony-nightmare, was delicious to him. He en lost money (and he took to that toy very kindly) ting up Goblin slides for magic-lanterns, whereon wers of Darkness were depicted as a sort of super- 10 l shell-fish, with human faces. In intensifying the ture of Giants, he had sunk quite a little capital; ough no painter himself, he could indicate, for the tion of his artists, with a piece of chalk, a certain fur- r for the countenances of those monsters, which was 15 destroy the peace of mind of any young gentleman n the ages of six and eleven, for the whole Christmas summer Vacation.

At he was in toys, he was (as most men are) in all things. You may easily suppose, therefore, that 20 the green cape, which reached down to the calves of s, there was buttoned up to the chin an uncommonly it fellow; and that he was about as choice a spirit, agreeable a companion, as ever stood in a pair of aded looking boots with mahogany-coloured tops. 25

Tackleton, the Toy-merchant, was going to be d. In spite of all this, he was going to be married. a young wife too; a beautiful young wife.

He didn't look much like a bridegroom, as he stood in rrier's kitchen, with a twist in his dry face, and a 30 n his body, and his hat jerked over the bridge of his nd his hands tucked down into the bottoms of his s, and his whole sarcastic ill-conditioned self peering one little corner of one little eye, like the concen- essence of any number of ravens. But, a bride- 35 e designed to be.

"In three days' time. Next Thursday. The last of the first month in the year. That's my wedding-day," Tackleton.

Did I mention that he had always one eye wide
5 and one eye nearly shut; and that the one eye nearly
was always the expressive eye? I don't think I did.

"That's my wedding-day!" said Tackleton, rattling money.

"Why, it's our wedding-day too," exclaimed the Carrier.
10 "Ha, ha!" laughed Tackleton. "Odd! You're
such another couple. Just!"

The indignation of Dot at this presumptuous assumption
is not to be described. What next? His imagination
would compass the possibility of just such another
15 perhaps. The man was mad.

"I say! a word with you," murmured Tackleton, nudging
the Carrier with his elbow, and taking him a little aside.
"You'll come to the wedding? We're in the same boat,
you know."

20 "How in the same boat?" inquired the Carrier.

"A little disparity, you know;" said Tackleton, giving
another nudge. "Come and spend an evening with me
beforehand."

"Why?" demanded John, astonished at this proffered
25 hospitality.

"Why?" returned the other. "That's a new way of
receiving an invitation. Why, for pleasure; society,
you know, and all that!"

"I thought you were never sociable," said John, in a
30 plain way.

"Tchah! It's of no use to be anything but free with
I see," said Tackleton. "Why, then, the truth is you
are—what tea-drinking people call a sort of a comfortable
appearance together: you and your wife. We know both
of us know, but——"

"No, we don't know better," interposed John. "What are you talking about?"

"Well! We *don't* know better, then," said Tackleton. "We'll agree that we don't. As you like; what does it utter? I was going to say, as you have that sort of appearance, your company will produce a favourable effect on Mrs. Tackleton that will be. And, though I don't think your good lady's very friendly to me, in this matter, still she can't help herself from falling into my ways, for there's a compactness and cosiness of appearance about her that always tells, even in an indifferent case. You'll say you'll come?"

"We have arranged to keep our Wedding-Day (as far that goes) at home," said John. "We have made the promise to ourselves these six months. We think, you know, that home—"

"Bah! what's home?" cried Tackleton. "Four walls and a ceiling! (why don't you kill that Cricket; *I* would! I always do. I hate their noise.) There are four walls and a ceiling at my house. Come to me!"

"You kill your Crickets, eh?" said John.

"Scrunch 'em, Sir," returned the other, setting his heel firmly on the floor. "You'll say you'll come? It's as much your interest as mine, you know, that the women should persuade each other that they're quiet and contented, and couldn't be better off. I know their way. Whatever one woman says, another woman is deterred to clinch, always. There's that spirit of emulation among 'em, Sir, that if your wife says to my wife, 'I'm the happiest woman in the world, and mine's the best band in the world, and I dote on him,' my wife will say the same to yours, or more, and half believe it."

"Do you mean to say she don't, then?" asked the other.

"Don't!" cried Tackleton, with a short, sharp laugh. "I don't what?"

The Carrier had had some faint idea of adding, "dote upon you." But happening to meet the half-closed eye, as it twinkled upon him over the turned-up collar of the cape, which was within an ace of poking it out, he felt it
5 such an unlikely part and parcel of anything to be doted on, that he substituted, "that she don't believe it?"

"Ah, you dog! You're joking," said Tackleton.

But the Carrier, though slow to understand the full drift of his meaning, eyed him in such a serious manner
10 that he was obliged to be a little more explanatory.

"I have the humour," said Tackleton: holding up the fingers of his left hand, and tapping the forefinger, to imply 'there I am, Tackleton to wit:' "I have the humour,
15 Sir, to marry a young wife and a pretty wife:" here he rapped his little finger, to express the Bride; not sparingly but sharply; with a sense of power. "I'm able to gratify that humour and I do. It's my whim. But—now look there."

He pointed to where Dot was sitting, thoughtfully
20 before the fire; leaning her dimpled chin upon her hand and watching the bright blaze. The Carrier looked at her, and then at him, and then at her, and then at him again.

"She honours and obeys, no doubt, you know," said
25 Tackleton; "and that, as I am not a man of sentiment is quite enough for *me*. But do you think there's anything more in it?"

"I think," observed the Carrier, "that I should chud any man out of window, who said there wasn't."

30 "Exactly so," returned the other with an unusual alacrity of assent. "To be sure! Doubtless you would Of course. I'm certain of it. Good night. Pleasant dreams!"

The good Carrier was puzzled, and made uncomfortable
35 and uncertain, in spite of himself. He couldn't help *showing it*, in his manner.

“Good night, my dear friend!” said Tackleton, compassionately. “I’m off. We’re exactly alike, in reality. You won’t give us to-morrow evening? Well! day you go out visiting, I know. I’ll meet you, and bring my wife that is to be. It’ll do her good. 5
Is she agreeable? Thank’ee. What’s that!”

There was a loud cry from the Carrier’s wife; a loud, sharp, sudden cry, that made the room ring, like a glass vessel. She had risen from her seat, and stood like one transfixed with error and surprise. The Stranger had advanced towards the fire to warm himself, and stood within a short distance of her chair. But quite still.

“What’s the matter?” cried the Carrier. “Mary! Darling! What’s the matter?”

They were all about her in a moment. Caleb, who had been dozing on the cake-box, in the first imperfect recovery of his suspended presence of mind seized Miss Slowboy by the hair of her head, but immediately apologised.

“Mary!” exclaimed the Carrier, supporting her in his arms.

“Are you ill! What is it? Tell me dear!”

She only answered by beating her hands together, and then fell into a wild fit of laughter. Then, sinking from her perch upon the ground, she covered her face with her apron, and wept bitterly. And then she laughed again, and then she cried again; and then, she said how it was, and suffered him to lead her to the fire, where she sat down as before. The old man standing, as before; still.

“I’m better, John,” she said. “I’m quite well now—

“John!” But John was on the other side of her. Why had she turned her face towards the strange old gentleman, as if she were kissing him! Was her brain wandering?

“Only a fancy, John dear—a kind of shock—a something coming suddenly before my eyes—I don’t know what it was. It’s quite gone; quite gone.”

"I'm glad it's gone," muttered Tackleton, turning the expressive eye all round the room. "I wonder where it's gone, and what it was. Humph! Caleb, come here! Who's that with the grey hair?"

- 5 "I don't know, Sir," returned Caleb in a whisper. "Never see him before, in all my life. A beautiful figure for a nut-cracker; quite a new model. With a screw-jack opening down into his waistcoat, he'd be lovely."

"Not ugly enough," said Tackleton.

- 10 "Or for a firebox, either," observed Caleb, in deep contemplation, "what a model! Unscrew his head to put the matches in; turn him heels up'ards for the light; and what a firebox for a gentleman's mantel-shelf just as it stands!"

- 15 "Not half ugly enough," said Tackleton. "Nothing in him at all. Come! Bring that box! All right now I hope?"

"Oh, quite gone! Quite gone!" said the little woman waving him hurriedly away. "Good night!"

- 20 "Good night," said Tackleton. "Good night, Jol Peerybingle! Take care how you carry that box, Caleb! Let it fall, and I'll murder you! Dark as pitch, and the weather worse than ever, eh? Good night!"

- So, with another sharp look round the room, he went out at the door; followed by Caleb with the wedding-cake on his head.

- The Carrier had been so much astounded by his little wife, and so busily engaged in soothing and tending her that he had scarcely been conscious of the Stranger's presence, until now, when he again stood there, the only guest.

"He don't belong to them, you see," said John. "I must give him a hint to go."

- "I beg your pardon, friend," said the old gentleman
 25 *advancing to him*; "the more so, as I fear your wife is well; but the Attendant whom my infirmities

He touched his ears and shook his head, "renders almost indispensable, not having arrived, I fear there must be some mistake. The bad night which made the shelter of your comfortable cart (may I never have a worse!) so acceptable, is still as bad as ever. Would you, in your kindness, suffer me to rent a bed here?"

"Yes, yes," cried Dot. "Yes! Certainly!"

"Oh!" said the Carrier, surprised by the rapidity of his consent. "Well! I don't object; but still I'm not quite sure that—" 10

"Hush!" she interrupted. "Dear John!"

"Why, he's stone deaf," urged John.

"I know he is, but—Yes, Sir, certainly. Yes! certainly! I'll make him up a bed, directly, John."

As she hurried off to do it, the flutter of her spirits, and the agitation of her manner, were so strange, that the Carrier stood looking after her, quite confounded. 15

"Did its mothers make it up a Beds then!" cried Miss Slowboy to the Baby; "and did its hair grow brown and curly, when its caps was lifted off, and frighten it, a precious Pets, a sitting by the fires!" 20

With that unaccountable attraction of the mind to trifles, which is often incidental to a state of doubt and confusion, the Carrier, as he walked slowly to and fro, found himself mentally repeating even these absurd words, many times. So many times that he got them by heart, and was still conning them over and over, like a lesson, when Tilly, after administering as much friction to the little bald head with her hand as she thought wholesome according to the practice of nurses), had once more tied the Baby's cap on. 25 30

"And frightened it a precious Pets, a sitting by the fire. What frightened Dot, I wonder!" mused the Carrier, pacing to and fro.

He scouted, from his heart, the insinuations of the Slowboy-merchant, and yet they filled him with a vague, 35

indefinite uneasiness; for Tackleton was quick and sly; and he had that painful sense, himself, of being a man of slow perception, that a broken hint was always worrying to him. He certainly had no intention in his mind of linking anything that Tackleton had said, with the unusual conduct of his wife; but the two subjects of reflection came into his mind together, and he could not keep them asunder.

The bed was soon made ready; and the visitor, declining all refreshment but a cup of tea, retired. Then Dot: quite well again, she said: quite well again: arranged the great chair in the chimney-corner for her husband; filled his pipe and gave it him; and took her usual little stool beside him on the hearth.

She always *would* sit on that little stool; I think she must have had a kind of notion that it was a coaxing, wheedling, little stool.

She was, out and out, the very best filler of a pipe, I should say, in the four quarters of the globe. To see her put that chubby little finger in the bowl, and then blow down the pipe to clear the tube; and, when she had done so, affect to think that there was really something in the tube, and blow a dozen times, and hold it to her eye like a telescope, with a most provoking twist in her capital little face, as she looked down it; was quite a brilliant thing. As to the tobacco, she was perfect mistress of the subject; and her lighting of the pipe, with a wisp of paper, when the Carrier had it in his mouth—going so very near his nose, and yet not scorching it—was Art: high Art, Sir.

And the Cricket and the Kettle, turning up again, acknowledged it! The bright fire, blazing up again, acknowledged it! The little Mower on the clock, in his *unheeded* work, acknowledged it! The Carrier, in his *smoothing* forehead and expanding face, acknowledged it: readiest of all.

nd as he soberly and thoughtfully puffed at his old
; and as the Dutch clock ticked; and as the red fire
med; and as the Cricket chirped; that Genius of his
rth and Home (for such the Cricket was) came out,
dry shape, into the room, and summoned many forms 5
Home about him. Dots of all ages, and all sizes,
l the chamber. Dots who were merry children,
ing on before him, gathering flowers, in the fields;
Dots, half shrinking from, half yielding to, the pleading
is own rough image; newly-married Dots, alighting 10
e door, and taking wondering possession of the house-
keys; motherly little Dots, attended by fictitious Slow-
, bearing babies to be christened; matronly Dots, still
g and blooming, watching Dots of daughters, as
danced at rustic balls; fat Dots, encircled and beset 15
roops of rosy grand-children; withered Dots, who
ed on sticks, and tottered as they crept along. Old
iers too, appeared, with blind old Boxers lying at
feet; and newer carts with younger drivers ("Peery-
le Brothers" on the tilt); and sick old Carriers, 20
ed by the gentlest hands; and graves of dead and gone
Carriers, green in the churchyard. And as the
ket showed him all these things—he saw them plainly,
gh his eyes were fixed upon the fire—the Carrier's
t grew light and happy, and he thanked his House- 25

Gods with all his might, and cared no more for
ff and Tackleton than you do.

ut what was that young figure of a man, which the
e Fairy Cricket set so near Her stool, and which
ained there, singly and alone? Why did it linger still, 30
ear her, with its arm upon the chimney-piece, ever
ating "Married! and not to me!"

h Dot! Oh failing Dot! There is no place for it
ll your husband's visions; why has its shadow fallen
is hearth!

CHIRP THE SECOND

CALEB PLUMMER and his Blind Daughter lived a by themselves, as the Story-books say—and my b with yours to back it I hope, on the Story-books, ing anything in this workaday world!—Caleb P.
5 and his Blind Daughter lived all alone by themse little cracked nutshell of a wooden house, which truth, no better than a pimple on the prominent nose of Gruff and Tackleton. The premises of Gr Tackleton were the great feature of the street; b
10 might have knocked down Caleb Plummer's dwelli a hammer or two, and carried off the pieces in a cart

If any one had done the dwelling house of Caleb mer the honour to miss it after such an inroad, i have been, no doubt, to commend its demolition a
15 improvement. It stuck to the premises of Gru Tackleton, like a barnacle to a ship's keel, or a sn door, or a little bunch of toadstools to the stem of But it was the germ from which the full-grown t Gruff and Tackleton had sprung; and under its cra
20 the Gruff before last had, in a small way, made toy generation of old boys and girls, who had played wit

the Blind Girl never knew that ceilings were discoloured; walls blotched and bare of plaster here and there; crevices unstopped and widening every day; beams creaking and tending downward. The Blind Girl knew that iron was rusting, wood rotting, paper peeling; the very size, and shape, and true proportion of the thing, withering away. The Blind Girl never knew ugly shapes of delf and earthenware were on the board; sorrow and faintheartedness were in the house; that her scanty hairs were turning greyer and more grey, on her sightless face. The Blind Girl never knew had a master, cold, exacting, and uninterested: never that Tackleton was Tackleton in short; but lived in relief of an eccentric humourist who loved to have his wits with them; and who while he was the Guardian Angel of her lives, disdained to hear one word of thankfulness. All was Caleb's doing; all the doing of her simple father! But he too had a Cricket on his Hearth; and listening sadly to its music when the motherless Blind Girl was very young, that Spirit had inspired him with the thought that even her great deprivation might be al-
changed into a blessing, and the girl made happy by little means. For all the Cricket Tribe are potent spirits, even though the people who hold converse with them do not know it (which is frequently the case); and are not in the Unseen World, Voices more gentle and true; that may be so implicitly relied on, or that are certain to give none but tenderest counsel; as the Voices which the Spirits of the Fireside and the Hearth address themselves to human kind.

Caleb and his daughter were at work together in their working-room, which served them for their ordinary sitting-room as well; and a strange place it was. There were houses in it, finished and unfinished, for Dolls of all kinds in life. Suburban tenements for Dolls of modern times; kitchens and single apartments for Dolls of the

lower classes; capital town residences for Dolls estate. Some of these establishments were already established according to estimate, with a view to the comfort of Dolls of limited income; others could be fitted on the most expensive scale, at a moment's notice, from the shelves of chairs and tables, sofas, bedsteads, and tapestries. The nobility and gentry and public in general, whose accommodation these tenements were designed to provide here and there, in baskets, staring straight up at the sky, but in denoting their degrees in society, and conforming to their respective stations (which experience showed to be lamentably difficult in real life), the makers of them had far improved on Nature, who is often from her own perverse; for they, not resting on such arbitrary standards of taste, satin, cotton-print, and bits of rag, had superadded to the personal differences which allowed of no compromise. Thus, the Doll-lady of Distinction had wax-work features of perfect symmetry; but only she and her compeers were of the first grade in the social scale being made of leather; the next of coarse linen stuff. As to the common-people, they had just so many matches out of tinder-boxes, and arms and legs, and there they were—established in their sphere at once, beyond the possibility of getting better.

There were various other samples of his handiwork besides Dolls, in Caleb Plummer's room. There were Noah's Arks, in which the Birds and Beasts were commonly tight fit, I assure you; though they were crammed in, anyhow, at the roof, and rattled and jangled into the smallest compass. By a bold poetical licence, most of these Noah's Arks had knockers on the doors, inconsistent appendages perhaps, as suggestive of the callers and a Postman, yet a pleasant finish to the exterior of the building. There were scores of melancholy *carpets* which, when the wheels went round, performed a *doleful music*. Many small fiddles, drums, and other *instruments of torture*; no end of cannon, shield

s and guns. There were little tumblers in red
hes, incessantly swarming up high obstacles of red-
and coming down, head first, on the other side; and
were innumerable old gentlemen of respectable, not
venerable appearance, insantly flying over horizon- 5
gs, inserted for the purpose, in their own street doors.
were beasts of all sorts; horses, in particular, of
breed, from the spotted barrel on four pegs, with a
tippet for a mane, to the thoroughbred rocker on his
st mettle. As it would have been hard to count the 10
s upon dozens of grotesque figures that were ever
to commit all sorts of absurdities on the turning of
dle; so it would have been no easy task to mention any
n folly, vice or weakness, that had not its type, imme-
or remote, in Caleb Plummer's room. And not in an 15
erated form; for very little handles will move men
women to as strange performances, as any Toy was
nade to undertake.

the midst of all these objects, Caleb and his daughter
work. The Blind Girl busy as a Doll's dressmaker; 20
painting and glazing the four-pair front of a desir-
amily mansion.

e care imprinted in the lines of Caleb's face, and his
bed and dreamy manner, which would have sat well
me alchemist or abstruse student, were at first sight 25
d contrast to his occupation, and the trivialities about

But trivial things, invented and pursued for bread,
re very serious matters of fact; and, apart from this
leration, I am not at all prepared to say, myself, that
eb had been a Lord Chamberlain, or a Member of 30
ment, or a lawyer, or even a great speculator, he
have dealt in toys one whit less whimsical; while I
a very great doubt whether they would have been as
ess.

*you were out in the rain last night, father, in your
ul, new, great-coat,"* said Caleb's daughter. 35

"In my beautiful new great-coat," answered Caleb, glancing towards a clothes-line in the room, on which sack-cloth garment previously described, was caref-
hung up to dry.

5 "How glad I am you bought it, father!"

"And of such a tailor, too," said Caleb. "Quite a fashionable tailor. It's too good for me!"

The Blind Girl rested from her work, and laughed with delight, "Too good, father! What can be too good
10 you?"

"I'm half ashamed to wear it though," said Caleb, watching the effect of what he said, upon her brighter face; "upon my word. When I hear the boys and people say behind me, 'Halloa! Here's a swell!' I don't know
15 which way to look. And when the beggar wouldn't come away last night; and, when I said I was a very common man, said 'No, your Honour! Bless your Honour, don't say that!' I was quite ashamed. I really felt as if I had a right to wear it."

20 Happy Blind Girl! How merry she was, in her exultation!

"I see you, father," she said, clasping her hands, plainly, as if I had the eyes I never want when you are with me. A blue coat——"

25 "Bright blue," said Caleb.

"Yes, yes! Bright blue! exclaimed the girl, turning her radiant face; "the colour I can just remember in the blessed sky! You told me it was blue before! A bright blue coat——"

30 "Made loose to the figure," suggested Caleb.

"Yes! Loose to the figure!" cried the Blind Girl, laughing heartily; "and in it you, dear father, with your merry eye, your smiling face, your free step, and your dark hair looking so young and handsome!"

35 "Halloa! Halloa!" said Caleb. "I shall be vain, presently."

"I think you are, already," cried the Blind Girl, pointing him, in her glee. "I know you, father! Ha ha ha! We found you out, you see!"

How different the picture in her mind, from Caleb, as he observed her! She had spoken of his free step. She was right in that. For years and years, he never once had crossed that threshold at his own slow pace, but with a footfall counterfeited for her ear; and never had he, when his heart was heaviest, forgotten the light tread that was to her under hers so cheerful and courageous! 5 10

Heaven knows! But I think Caleb's vague bewilderedness of manner may have half originated in his having confused himself about himself and everything around him, for the love of his Blind Daughter. How could the little man be otherwise than bewildered, after labouring for so many years to destroy his own identity, and that of all the objects that had any bearing on it! 15

"There we are," said Caleb, falling back a pace or two to form the better judgment of his work; "as near the real thing as sixpenn'orth of halfpence is to sixpence. What pity that the whole front of the house opens at once! If there were only a staircase in it now, and regular doors to the rooms to go in at! But that's the worst of my calling, I'm always deluding myself, and swindling myself." 20

"You are speaking quite softly. You are not tired, father?" 25

"Tired," echoed Caleb, with a great burst of animation, "what should tire me, Bertha? I was never tired. What does it mean?"

To give the greater force to his words, he checked himself in an involuntary imitation of two half-length stretching and yawning figures on the mantel-shelf, who were represented as in one eternal state of weariness from the waist upwards; and hummed a fragment of a song. It was a Bacchanalian song, something about a Sparkling Bowl; and he sang it with an assumption of a Devil-may-care. 30 35

voice, that made his face a thousand times more and more thoughtful than ever.

"What! You're singing, are you?" said Tom putting his head in, at the door. "Go it! I can't

- 5 Nobody would have suspected him of it. I know what is generally termed a singing face, by any means.

"I can't afford to sing," said Tackleton. "I'm not. I hope you can afford to work too. Hardly both, I should think?"

- 10 "If you could only see him, Bertha, how he's worried me!" whispered Caleb. "Such a man to joke! you know if you didn't know him, he was in earnest—would you now?"

The Blind Girl smiled, and nodded.

- 15 "The bird that can sing and won't sing, must be singing, they say," grumbled Tackleton. "What about that owl that can't sing, and oughtn't to sing, and why does there anything that *he* should be made to do?"

- "The extent to which he's winking at this moment," whispered Caleb to his daughter. "Oh, my gracious!"

"Always merry and light-hearted with us!" said smiling Bertha.

"Oh, you're there, are you?" answered Tom. "Poor Idiot!"

- 25 He really did believe she was an Idiot; and he was of the belief, I can't say whether consciously or not, but he was being fond of him.

"Well! and being there, how are you?" said Tom in his grudging way.

- 30 "Oh! well; quite well. And as happy as ever I wish me to be. As happy as you would make me, if you could!"

"Poor Idiot!" muttered Tackleton. "No reason. Not a gleam!"

- 35 *The Blind Girl* took his hand and kissed it; but she laid her own *moment* in her own two hands; and laid her own

enderly, before releasing. There was such unspeakable affection and such fervent gratitude in the act, that Tackleton himself was moved to say, in a milder growl than usual:

What's the matter now?"

5

I stood it close beside my pillow when I went to sleep at night, and remembered it in my dreams. And when day broke, and the glorious red sun—the red sun, dear?"

Red in the mornings and the evenings, Bertha,"

10

poor Caleb, with a woeful glance at his employer.

When it rose, and the bright light I almost fear to meet myself against in walking, came into the room, I moved the little tree towards it, and blessed Heaven for making things so precious, and blessed you for sending me to cheer me!"

15

Bedlam broke loose!" said Tackleton under his breath. "We shall arrive at the strait-waistcoat and floggers soon. We're getting on!"

Caleb, with his hands hooked loosely in each other, stood vacantly before him while his daughter spoke, as if he really were uncertain (I believe he was) whether Tackleton had done anything to deserve her thanks, or not. If he could have been a perfectly free agent, at that moment, required, on pain of death, to kick the Toy-trader, or fall at his feet, according to his merits, I believe it would have been an even chance which course he would have taken. Yet Caleb knew that with his own hands he had brought the little rose-tree home for her, carefully; and that with his own lips he had forged innocent deception which should help to keep her from suspecting how much, how very much, he every day lied himself, that she might be the happier.

25

30

"Bertha!" said Tackleton, assuming, for the nonce, a false cordiality. "Come here."

"Oh! I can come straight to you! You needn't guide me!" she rejoined.

"Shall I tell you a secret, Bertha?"

"If you will!" she answered, eagerly.

5 How bright the darkened face! How adorned with light, the listening head!

"This is the day on which little what's-her-name, the spoilt child; Peerybingle's wife; pays her regular visit to you—makes her fantastic Pic-Nic here; an't it?"
10 said Tackleton, with a strong expression of distaste for the whole concern.

"Yes," replied Bertha. "This is the day."

"I thought so!" said Tackleton. "I should like to join the party."

15 "Do you hear that, father!" cried the Blind Girl in an ecstasy.

"Yes, yes, I hear it," murmured Caleb, with the fixed look of a sleep-walker; "but I don't believe it. It's one of my lies, I've no doubt."

20 "You see I—I want to bring the Peerybingles a little more into company with May Fielding," said Tackleton. "I am going to be married to May."

"Married!" cried the Blind Girl, starting from him.

"She's such a con-founded Idiot," muttered Tackleton
25 "that I was afraid she'd never comprehend me. A Bertha! Married! Church, parson, clerk, beadle, glass coach, bells, breakfast, bride-cake, favours, marrow bones, cleavers, and all the rest of the tomfoolery. wedding, you know; a wedding. Don't you know what
30 a wedding is?"

"I know," replied the Blind Girl, in a gentle tone. "I understand!"

"Do you?" muttered Tackleton. "It's more than expected. Well! On that account I want to join the
35 party, and to bring May and her mother. I'll send
"ttle something or other, before the afternoon. A

g of mutton, or some comfortable trifle of that sort. You'll expect me?"

"Yes," she answered.

She had drooped her head, and turned away; and so stood, with her hands crossed, musing. 5

"I don't think you will," muttered Tackleton, looking at her; "for you seem to have forgotten all about it, ready. Caleb!"

"I may venture to say I'm here, I suppose," thought Caleb. "Sir!" 10

"Take care she don't forget what I've been saying to her."

"*She* never forgets," returned Caleb. "It's one of the few things she an't clever in."

"Every man thinks his own geese swans," observed the Toy-merchant, with a shrug. "Poor devil!" 15

Having delivered himself of which remark, with infinite contempt, old Gruff and Tackleton withdrew.

Bertha remained where he had left her, lost in meditation. The gaiety had vanished from her downcast face, and it was very sad. Three or four times, she shook her head, as if bewailing some remembrance or some loss; but her sorrowful reflections found no vent in words. 20

It was not until Caleb had been occupied, some time, in yoking a team of horses to a waggon by the summary process of nailing the harness to the vital parts of their bodies, that she drew near to his working-stool, and sitting down beside him, said: 25

"Father, I am lonely in the dark. I want my eyes: my patient, willing eyes." 30

"Here they are," said Caleb. "Always ready. They are more yours than mine, Bertha, any hour in the four and twenty. What shall your eyes do for you, dear?"

"Look round the room, father."

"*All right,*" said Caleb, "No sooner said than done, Bertha." 35

"Tell me about it."

"It's much the same as usual," said Caleb. "Homely but very snug. The gay colours on the wall; the bright flowers on the plates and dishes; the shining woodwork where there are beams or panels; the general cheerfulness and neatness of the building; make it very pretty."

Cheerful and neat it was wherever Bertha's hands could busy themselves. But nowhere else were cheerfulness and neatness possible, in the old crazy shed which Caleb's fancy so transformed.

"You have your working dress on, and are not so gallant as when you wear the handsome coat?" said Bertha, touching him.

"Not quite so gallant," answered Caleb. "Pretty brisk though."

"Father," said the Blind Girl, drawing close to his side and stealing one arm round his neck. "Tell me something about May. She is very fair?"

"She is indeed," said Caleb. And she was indeed. It was quite a rare thing to Caleb, not to have to draw on his invention.

"Her hair is dark," said Bertha, pensively, "darker than mine. Her voice is sweet and musical, I know. I have often loved to hear it. Her shape—"

"There's not a Doll's in all the room to equal it," said Caleb. "And her eyes!—"

He stopped; for Bertha had drawn closer round his neck; and from the arm that clung about him, came a warning pressure which he understood too well.

He coughed a moment, hammered for a moment, and then fell back upon the song about the Sparkling Bowl, his infallible resource in all such difficulties.

"Our friend, father; our benefactor. I am never tired, you know, of hearing about him.—Now was I, ever?" she said hastily.

"Of course not," answered Caleb. "And with reason."

"Ah! With how much reason!" cried the Blind Girl. With such fervency, that Caleb, though his motives were pure, could not endure to meet her face; but dropped his eyes as if she could have read in them his innocent secret.

"Then tell me again about him, dear father," said Martha. "Many times again! His face is benevolent, kind, and tender. Honest and true, I am sure it is. The only heart that tries to cloak all favours with a show of selfishness and unwillingness, beats in its every look and manner."

"And makes it noble," added Caleb in his quiet desperation.

"And makes it noble!" cried the Blind Girl. "He is better than May, father."

"Ye-es," said Caleb, reluctantly. "He's a little older than May. But that don't signify."

"Oh father, yes! To be his patient companion in infirmity and age; to be his gentle nurse in sickness, and his constant friend in suffering and sorrow; to know no business in working for his sake; to watch him, tend him; beside his bed and talk to him, awake; and pray for him asleep; what privileges these would be! What opportunities for proving all her truth and devotion to him! Could she do all this, dear father?"

"No doubt of it," said Caleb.

"I love her, father; I can love her from my soul!" claimed the Blind Girl. And saying so, she laid her poor blind face on Caleb's shoulder, and so wept and sobbed, that he was almost sorry to have brought that tearful happiness upon her.

In the meantime, there had been a pretty sharp commotion at John Peerybingle's; for little Mrs. Peerybingle usually couldn't think of going anywhere without the key; and to get the Baby under weigh, took time. Not that there was much of the Baby: speaking of it as a

thing of weight and measure: but there was a vast deal to do about and about it, and it all had to be done by easy stages. For instance: when the Baby was got, by hook and by crook, to a certain point of dressing, and you might have rationally supposed that another touch or two would finish him off, and turn him out a tip-top Baby challenging the world, he was unexpectedly extinguished in a flannel cap, and hustled off to bed; where he simmered (so to speak) between two blankets for the best part of an hour. From this state of inaction he was then recalled, shining very much and roaring violently, to partake of well! I would rather say, if you'll permit me to speak generally—of a slight repast. After which, he went to sleep again. Mrs. Peerybingle took advantage of this interval, to make herself as smart in a small way as ever you saw anybody in all your life; and, during the same short truce, Miss Slowboy insinuated herself into a spencer of a fashion so surprising and ingenious, that it had no connection with herself, or anything else in the universe, but was a shrunken, dog's-eared, independent fact, pursuing its lonely course without the least regard to anybody. By this time, the Baby, being all alive again, was invested, by the united efforts of Mrs. Peerybingle and Miss Slowboy, with a cream-coloured mantle for its body, and a sort of nankeen raised-pie for its head; and so in course of time they all three got down to the door, where the old horse had already taken more than the full value of his day's toll out of the Turnpike Trust, by tearing up the road with his impatient autographs—and whence Boxer might be dimly seen in the remote perspective, standing looking back, and tempting him to come on without orders.

As to a chair, or anything of that kind for helping Mrs. Peerybingle into the cart, you know very little of John, I flatter myself, if you think that was necessary, fore you could have seen him lift her from the ground

ere she was in her place, fresh and rosy, saying, "John! how CAN you! Think of Tilly!"

If I might be allowed to mention a young lady's legs, on my terms, I would observe of Miss Slowboy's that there is a fatality about them which rendered them singularly 5
ble to be grazed; and that she never effected the smallest cent or descent, without recording the circumstance upon em with a notch, as Robinson Crusoe marked the days on his wooden calendar. But as this might be con- sidered ungenteeled, I'll think of it. 10

"John? You've got the basket with the Veal and Ham-Pie and things; and the bottles of Beer?" said Dot. If you haven't, you must turn round again, this very minute."

"You're a nice little article," returned the Carrier, 15
to be talking about turning round, after keeping me a full quarter of an hour behind my time."

"I am sorry for it, John," said Dot in a great bustle, "but really could not think of going to Bertha's—I would not 20
it, John, on any account—without the Veal and Ham-Pie and things, and the bottles of Beer. Way!"

This monosyllable was addressed to the horse, who didn't mind it at all.

"Oh *do* way, John!" said Mrs. Peerybingle. "Please!"

"It'll be time enough to do that," returned John, "when 25
begin to leave things behind me. The basket's here, it's enough."

"What a hard-hearted monster you must be, John, not have said so, at once, and save me such a turn! I de- clared I wouldn't go to Bertha's without the Veal and Ham- 30
Pie and things, and the bottles of Beer, for any money. Regularly once a fortnight ever since we have been married, John, have we made our little Pic-Nic there. If any- thing was to go wrong with it, I should almost think we never to be lucky again."

"It was a kind thought in the first instance," said Carrier; "and I honour you for it, little woman."

"My dear John," replied Det, turning very red. "Do talk about honouring *me*. Good Gracious!"

5 "By the bye—" observed the Carrier. "That old gentleman,——"

Again so visibly, and instantly embarrassed.

"He's an odd fish," said the Carrier, looking straight along the road before them. "I can't make him out
0 don't believe there's any harm in him."

"None at all. I'm—I'm sure there's none at all."

"Yes?" said the Carrier, with his eyes attracted to face by the great earnestness of her manner. "I am { you feel so certain of it, because it's a confirmation to
5 It's curious that he should have taken it into his head ask leave to go on lodging with us; an't it? Things go about so strangely."

"So very strangely," she rejoined in a low voice: scarcely audible.

0 "However, he's a good-natured old gentleman," said John, "and pays as a gentleman, and I think his word to be relied upon, like a gentleman's. I had quite a long talk with him this morning: he can hear me better already he says, as he gets more used to my voice. He told me
5 great deal about himself, and I told him a good deal about myself, and a rare lot of questions he asked me. I gave him information about my having two beats, you know my business; one day to the right from our house and back again; another day to the left from our house and back
0 again (for he's a stranger and don't know the names of places about here;) and he seemed quite pleased. 'When then I shall be returning home to-night your way,' says, 'when I thought you'd be coming in an exactly opposite
direction. That's capital. I may trouble you for
other lift perhaps, but I'll engage not to fall so sound a

n.' He *was* sound asleep, sure-ly!—Dot! what are thinking of?"

"Thinking of, John? I—I was listening to you."

Oh! That's all right!" said the honest Carrier. "I afraid, from the look of your face, that I had gone 5
 oling on so long, as to set you thinking about some-
 ; else. I was very near it, I'll be bound."

ot making no reply, they jogged on, for some little
 in silence. But it was not easy to remain silent very
 in John Peerybingle's cart, for everybody on the road 10
 something to say; though it might only be "How are
 ' and indeed it was very often nothing else, still, to give
 back again in the right spirit of cordiality, required, not
 ly a nod and a smile, but as wholesome an action of
 ungs withal as a long-winded Parliamentary speech. 15
 etimes, passengers on foot, or horseback, plodded on a
 way beside the cart, for the express purpose of hav-
 chat; and then there was a great deal to be said on
 sides.

en, Boxer gave occasion to more good-natured recog- 20
 ns of and by the Carrier, than half-a-dozen Christians
 I have done? Everybody knew him, all along the
 —especially the fowls and pigs, who when they saw
 approaching, with his body all on one side, and his
 pricked up inquisitively, and that knob of a tail mak- 25
 he most of itself in the air, immediately withdrew into
 the back settlements, without waiting for the honour of
 arer acquaintance. He had business everywhere; go-
 down all the turnings, looking into all the wells, bolting
 id out of all the cottages, dashing into the midst of all 30
 Dame-Schools, fluttering all the pigeons, magnifying
 ails of all the cats, and trotting into the public-houses
 a regular customer. Wherever he went, somebody or
 might have been heard to cry, "Halloa! Here's
 !" and out came that somebody forthwith, accom-

panied by at least two or three other somebodies, to give John Peerybingle and his pretty wife, Good Day.

The packages and parcels for the errand cart, were numerous; and there were many stoppages to take them in and give them out; which were not by any means the worst part of the journey. Some people were so full of expectation about their parcels, and other people were so full of inextinguishable directions about their parcels, and John had such a lively interest in all the parcels, that it was as good as a play. Likewise, there were articles to carry, which required to be considered and discussed, and in reference to the adjustment and disposition of which, councils had to be holden by the Carrier and the senders: at which Boxes usually assisted, in short fits of the closest attention, and long fits of tearing round and round the assembled sages, and barking himself hoarse. Of all these little incidents Dot was the amused and open-eyed spectatress from her chair in the cart; and as she sat there, looking on: a charming little portrait framed to admiration by the tilt: there was no lack of nudgings and glancings and whisperings and envyings among the younger men, I promise you. And this delighted John the Carrier, beyond measure; for he was proud to have his little wife admired; knowing that she didn't mind it—that, if anything, she rather liked it perhaps.

The trip was a little foggy, to be sure, in the January weather; and was raw and cold. But who cared for such trifles? Not Dot, decidedly. Not Tilly Slowboy, for she deemed sitting in a cart, on any terms, to be the highest point of human joys; the crowning circumstance of earthly hopes. Not the Baby, I'll be sworn; for it's not in Baby's nature to be warmer or more sound asleep, though its capacity is great in both respects, than that blessed young Peerybingle was, all the way.

You couldn't see very far in the fog, of course; but y

ld see a great deal, oh, a great deal! It's astonishing
 v much you may see in a thicker fog than that, if you will
 y take the trouble to look for it. Why even to sit watch-
 for the Fairy-rings in the fields, and for the patches of
 r-frost still lingering in the shade, near hedges and by 5
 s, was a pleasant occupation: to make no mention of
 unexpected shapes in which the trees themselves came
 ting out of the mist, and glided into it again. The
 ges were tangled and bare, and waved a multitude of
 hted garlands in the wind; but there was no discour- 10
 ment in this. It was agreeable to contemplate; for it
 le the fireside warmer in possession, and the summer
 ener in expectancy. The river looked chilly; but it was
 notion, and moving at a good pace; which was a great
 at. The canal was rather slow and torpid; that must 15
 admitted. Never mind. It would freeze the sooner
 en the frost set fairly in, and then there would be skat-
 , and sliding; and the heavy old barges, frozen up some-
 ere, near a wharf, would smoke their rusty iron chim-
 -pipes all day, and have a lazy time of it.

n one place, there was a great mound of weeds or
 bble burning; and they watched the fire, so white in the
 time, flaring through the fog, with only here and there
 ash of red in it, until, in consequence as she observed
 the smoke "getting up her nose," Miss Slowboy choked 25
 he could do anything of that sort on the smallest provo-
 ion—and woke the Baby, who wouldn't go to sleep again.
 t Boxer, who was in advance some quarter of a mile or
 had already passed the outposts of the town, and gained
 corner of the street where Caleb and his daughter lived; 30
 l long before they reached the door, he and the Blind
 l were on the pavement waiting to receive them.

Boxer, by the way, made certain delicate distinctions of
 own, in his communication with Bertha, which persuade
 fully that he knew her to be blind. He never sought to 35
 ct her attention by looking at her, as he often did with

other people, but touched her, invariably. What experience he could ever have had of blind people or blind dogs, don't know. He had never lived with a blind master; nor had Mr. Boxer the elder, nor Mrs. Boxer, nor any of his
5 respectable family on either side, ever been visited with blindness, that I am aware of. He may have found it out for himself, perhaps, but he had got hold of it somehow and therefore he had hold of Bertha too, by the skirt, and kept hold, until Mrs. Peerybingle and the Baby, and Mr.
10 Slowboy, and the basket, were all got safely within doors.

May Fielding was already come; and so was her mother—a little querulous chip of an old lady with a peevish face who, in right of having preserved a waist like a bedpost, was supposed to be a most transcendent figure; and who, in
15 consequence of having once been better off, or of labouring under an impression that she might have been, if something had happened which never did happen, and seemed to have never been particularly likely to come to pass—but it's all the same—was very genteel and patronizing indeed.
20 Gruff and Tackleton was also there, doing the agreeable with the evident sensation of being as perfectly at home and as unquestionably in his own element, as a fresh young salmon on the top of the Great Pyramid.

"May! My dear old friend!" cried Dot, running up to
25 meet her. "What a happiness to see you!"

Her old friend was, to the full, as hearty and as glad as she; and it really was, if you'll believe me, quite a pleasant sight to see them embrace. Tackleton was a man of taste beyond all question. May was very pretty.

30 You know sometimes, when you are used to a pretty face how, when it comes into contact and comparison with another pretty face, it seems for the moment to be homelier and faded, and hardly to deserve the high opinion you have had of it. Now, this was not at all the case, either with Dot
35 or May; for May's face set off Dot's, and Dot's face set off May's, so naturally and agreeably, that, as John Pe-

e was very near saying when he came into the room, ought to have been born sisters—which was the only ovement you could have suggested.

ickleton had brought his leg of mutton, and, wonder- relate, a tart besides—but we don't mind a little dissi- on when our brides are in the case; we don't get mar- every day—and in addition to these dainties, there were Veal and Ham-Pie, and "things," as Mrs. Peerybingle d them; which were chiefly nuts and oranges, and s, and such small deer. When the repast was set on the board, flanked by Caleb's contribution, which a great wooden bowl of smoking potatoes (he was proted, by solemn compact, from producing any other ds), Tackleton led his intended mother-in-law to the of Honour. For the better gracing of this place at the Festival, the majestic old Soul had adorned herself a cap, calculated to inspire the thoughtless with senti- ts of awe. She also wore her gloves. But let us be zel, or die!

aleb sat next his daughter; Dot and her old schoolfellow e side by side; the good Carrier took care of the bottom e table. Miss Slowboy was isolated, for the time being every article of furniture but the chair she sat on, that might have nothing else to knock the Baby's head nst.

s Tilly stared about her at the dolls and toys, they stared er and at the company. The venerable old gentlemen e street doors (who were all in full action) showed xial interest in the party; pausing occasionally before ing, as if they were listening to the conversation: and plunging wildly over and over, a great many times, out halting for breath,—as in a frantic state of delight the whole proceedings.

certainly, if these old gentlemen were inclined to have a lish joy, in the contemplation of Tackleton's discom- , they had good reason to be satisfied. Tackleton

couldn't get on at all; and the more cheerful his intended bride became in Dot's society, the less he liked it, though he had brought them together for that purpose. For he was a regular Dog in the Manger, was Tackleton; and when they laughed, and he couldn't, he took it into his head, immediately, that they must be laughing at him.

"Ah, May!" said Dot. "Dear dear, what changes! To talk of those merry school-days makes one young again."

"Why, you an't particularly old, at any time, are you?" said Tackleton.

"Look at my sober plodding husband there," returned Dot. "He adds twenty years to my age at least. Don't you, John?"

"Forty," John replied.

"How many *you'll* add to May's, I'm sure I don't know," said Dot, laughing. "But she can't be much less than a hundred years of age on her next birthday."

"Ha ha!" laughed Tackleton. Hollow as a drum, that laugh though. And he looked as if he could have twisted Dot's neck comfortably.

"Dear dear!" said Dot. "Only to remember how we used to talk, at school, about the husbands we would choose! I don't know how young, and how handsome, and how gay, and how lively, mine was not to be! And as to May—! Ah, dear! I don't know whether to laugh or cry, when I think what silly girls we were."

May seemed to know which to do; for the colour flashed into her face, and tears stood in her eyes.

"Even the very persons themselves—real live young men—were fixed on sometimes," said Dot. "We little thought how things would come about. I never fixed on John I'm sure; I never so much as thought of him. And if I had told you, you were ever to be married to Mr. Tackleton, why, you'd have slapped me. Wouldn't you, May?"

Though May didn't say yes, she certainly didn't say no, or express no, by any means.

keleton laughed—quite shouted, he laughed so loud. Peerybingle laughed too, in his ordinary good-natured contented manner; but his was a mere whisper of a laugh to Tackleton's.

"You couldn't help yourselves, for all that. You couldn't assist us, you see," said Tackleton. "Here we are! Here we are! Where are your gay young bridegrooms

one of them are dead," said Dot; "and some of them are ten. Some of them, if they could stand among us at the moment, would not believe we were the same creatures; they would not believe that what they saw and heard was real, and *could* forget them so. No! they would not believe the word of it!"

"Oh, Dot!" exclaimed the Carrier. "Little woman!"

She had spoken with such earnestness and fire, that she was in need of some recalling to herself, without doubt. Her husband's check was very gentle, for he merely interposed, as he supposed, to shield old Tackleton; but it was not effectual, for she stopped, and said no more. There was an uncommon agitation, even in her silence, which the old Tackleton, who had brought his half-shut eye to bear on her, noted closely; and remembered to some purpose as you will see.

She uttered no word, good or bad, but sat quite still, her eyes cast down; and made no sign of interest in what had passed. The good lady her mother now interposed, observing, in the first instance, that girls were girls, and bygones bygones, and that so long as young people were young and thoughtless, they would probably continue themselves like young and thoughtless persons: two or three other positions of a no less sound and unalterable character. She then remarked, in a despondent spirit, that she thanked Heaven she had always found her daughter May, a dutiful and obedient child; for she took no credit to herself, though she had every

reason to believe it was entirely owing to herself. With regard to Mr. Tackleton she said, That he was in a more eligible point of view an undeniable individual; and That he was in an eligible point of view a son-in-law to be desired, none in their senses could doubt. (She was very emphatic here.) With regard to the family into which he was so soon about, after some solicitation, to be admitted, she believed Mr. Tackleton knew that, although reduced in purse, it had some pretensions to gentility; and if certain circumstances, not wholly unconnected, she would go so far as to say, with the Indigo Trade, but to which she would not more particularly refer, had happened differently, it might perhaps have been in possession of Wealth. She then remarked that she would not allude to the past and would not mention that her daughter had for some time rejected the suit of Mr. Tackleton; and that she would not say a great many other things which she did say, in great length. Finally, she delivered it as the general result of her observation and experience, that those marriages which there was least of what was romantically and silly called love, were always the happiest; and that she anticipated the greatest possible amount of bliss—not rapturous bliss; but the solid, steady-going article—from the approaching nuptials. She concluded by informing the company that to-morrow was the day she had lived for, expressly; and that when it was over, she would desire nothing better than to be packed up and disposed of, in a genteel place of burial.

As these remarks were quite unanswerable: which is the happy property of all remarks that are sufficiently wide of the purpose: they changed the current of the conversation and diverted the general attention to the Veal and Ham Pie, the cold mutton, the potatoes, and the tart. In order that the bottled beer might not be slighted, John Peerybingle proposed To-morrow: the Wedding-Day; and called

and them to drink a bumper to it, before he proceeded on his journey.

For you ought to know that he only rested there, and gave the old horse a bait. He had to go some four or five miles farther on; and when he returned in the evening, he gave for Dot, and took another rest on his way home. This was the order of the day on all the Pic-Nic occasions, and had been, ever since their institution.

There were two persons present, beside the bride and the groom elect, who did but indifferent honour to the party. One of these was Dot, too flushed and discomposed to adapt herself to any small occurrence of the moment; the other, Bertha, who rose up hurriedly, before the rest, and left the table.

"Goodbye!" said stout John Peerybingle, pulling on his old dought coat. "I shall be back at the old time. Good all!"

"Good bye, John," returned Caleb.

He seemed to say it by rote, and to wave his hand in the same unconscious manner; for he stood observing Bertha with an anxious wondering face, that never altered its expression.

"Good bye, young shaver!" said the jolly Carrier, bending down to kiss the child; which Tilly Slowboy, now intent on her knife and fork, had deposited asleep (and strange way, without damage) in a little cot of Bertha's furniture. "good bye! Time will come, I suppose, when *you'll* get out into the cold, my little friend, and leave your older to enjoy his pipe and his rheumatics in the chimney-corner; eh? Where's Dot?"

"I'm here, John!" she said, starting.

"Come, come!" returned the Carrier, clapping his sound hands. "Where's the pipe?"

"I quite forgot the pipe, John."

"Forgot the pipe! Was such a wonder ever heard of! For forgot the pipe!"

"I'll — I'll fill it directly. It's soon done."

But it was not so soon done, either. It lay in the usual place; the Carrier's dreadnought pocket; with the little pouch, her own work, from which she was used to fill it; but her hand shook so, that she entangled it (and yet her hand was small enough to have come out easily, I am sure), and bungled terribly. The filling of the pipe and lighting those little offices in which I have commended her discretion, if you recollect; were vilely done, from first to last. During the whole process, Tackleton stood looking maliciously with the half-closed eye; which, whenever it met hers—or caught it, for it can hardly be said to have ever met another eye: rather being a kind of trap to snatch it up—augmented her confusion in a most remarkable degree.

"Why, what a clumsy Dot you are, this afternoon!" said John. "I could have done it better myself, I verily believe!"

With these good-natured words, he strode away; and presently was heard, in company with Boxer, and the old horse, and the cart, making lively music down the road. What time the dreamy Caleb still stood, watching his Blind Daughter, with the same expression on his face.

"Bertha!" said Caleb softly. "What has happened? How changed you are, my darling, in a few hours—since this morning. You silent and dull all day! What is it? Tell me!"

"Oh father, father!" cried the Blind Girl, bursting into tears. "Oh my hard, hard fate!"

Caleb drew his hand across his eyes before he answered her.

"But think how cheerful and how happy you have been Bertha! How good, and how much loved, by many people."

"That strikes me to the heart, dear father! Always so mindful of me! Always so kind to me!"

leb was very much perplexed to understand her.

"To be—to be blind, Bertha, my poor dear," he faltered, "great affliction; but——"

"I have never felt it!" cried the Blind Girl. "I have felt it, in its fulness. Never! I have sometimes
ed that I could see you, or could see him; only once,
father; only for one little minute; that I might know
it is I treasure up," she laid her hands upon her
st, "and hold here! That I might be sure I have it
! And sometimes (but then I was a child) I have
in my prayers at night, to think that when your
es ascended from my heart to Heaven, they might not
be true resemblance of yourselves. But I have never
these feelings long. They have passed away and left
tranquil and contented."

and they will again," said Caleb.

But father! Oh my good gentle father, bear with me,
in wicked!" said the Blind Girl. "This is not the sor-
that so weighs me down!"

Her father could not choose but let his moist eyes over-
she was so earnest and pathetic. But he did not
rstand her, yet.

"Bring her to me," said Bertha. "I cannot hold it
d and shut within myself. Bring her to me, father!"
He knew he hesitated, and said, "May. Bring May!"
May heard the mention of her name, and coming quietly
rds her, touched her on the arm. The Blind Girl
ed immediately, and held her by both hands.

"Look into my face, Dear heart, Sweet heart!" said
Bertha. "Read it with your beautiful eyes, and tell me if
Truth is written on it."

"Dear Bertha, Yes!"

The Blind Girl still, upturning the blank sightless face,
in which the tears were coursing fast, addressed her in
words:

There is not, in my Soul, a wish or thought that is not

for your good, bright May! There is not, in grateful recollection stronger than the deep re- which is stored there, of the many many time the full pride of Sight and Beauty, you have had
 5 tion for Blind Bertha, even when we two were when Bertha was as much a child as ever blindr Every blessing on your head! Light upon y course! Not the less, my dear May;" and sh wards her, in a closer grasp; "not the less
 10 because, to-day, the knowledge that you are to has wrung my heart almost to breaking! Fa Mary! oh forgive me that it is so, for the sake o done to relieve the weariness of my dark life: sake of the belief you have in me, when I call
 15 witness that I could not wish him married to a worthy of his Goodness!"

While speaking, she had released May Fieldi and clasped her garments in an attitude of mingle tion and love. Sinking lower and lower down,
 20 ceeded in her strange confession, she dropped the feet of her friend, and hid her blind face in her dress.

"Great Power!" exclaimed her father, smi blow with the truth, "have I deceived her from
 25 but to break her heart at last!"

It was well for all of them that Dot, that bear busy little Dot—for such she was, whatever fau and however you may learn to hate her, in go was well for all of them, I say, that she was the
 30 this would have ended, it were hard to tell. E covering her self-possession, interposed, before reply, or Caleb say another word.

"Come come, dear Bertha! come away with her your arm, May. So! How composed she
 35 *already*; and how good it is of her to mind v *cheery little* woman, kissing her upon the fore

way, dear Bertha! Come! and here's her good father will come with her; won't you Caleb? To—be—sure!"

Well, well! she was a noble little Dot in such things, and must have been an obdurate nature that could have withstood her influence. When she had got poor Caleb and his Bertha away, that they might comfort and console each other, as she knew they only could, she presently came bounding back—the saying is, as fresh as any daisy; *I say fresher*—to mount guard over that bridling little piece of consequence in the cap and gloves, and prevent the dear old creature from making discoveries.

"So bring me the precious Baby, Tilly," said she, drawing a chair to the fire; "and while I have it in my lap, here's Mrs. Fielding, Tilly, will tell me all about the management of Babies, and put me right in twenty points where I'm as wrong as can be. Won't you, Mrs. Fielding?"

Not even the Welsh Giant, who according to the popular expression, was so "slow" as to perform a fatal surgical operation upon himself, in emulation of a juggling-trick achieved by his arch-enemy at breakfast-time; not even he fell half so readily into the Snare prepared for him, as the old lady did into this artful Pitfall. The fact of Tackleton having walked out; and furthermore, of two or three people having been talking together at a distance, for two minutes, leaving her to her own resources; was quite enough to have put her on her dignity, and the bewailment of that mysterious convulsion in the Indigo Trade, for four-and-twenty hours. But this becoming deference to her experience, on the part of the young mother, was so irresistible, that after a short affectation of humility, she began to enlighten her with the best grace in the world; and sitting bolt upright before the wicked Dot, she did, in half an hour, deliver more infallible domestic recipes and precepts, than would if acted on) have utterly destroyed and done up that young Peerybingle, though he had been an Infant Samson. To change the theme, Dot did a little needlework—she

carried the contents of a whole work box in her pocket; however she contrived it, *I* don't know—then did a little nursing; then a little more needlework; then had a little whispering chat with May, while the old lady dozed
5 and so in little bits of bustle, which was quite her manner always, found it a very short afternoon. Then as it grew dark, and as it was a solemn part of this Institution of the Pic-Nic that she should perform all Bertha's household tasks, she trimmed the fire, and swept the hearth, and set
10 the tea-board out, and drew the curtain, and lighted a candle. Then, she played an air or two on a rude kind of harp, which Caleb had contrived for Bertha; and played them very well; for Nature had made her delicate little ear as choice a one for music as it would have been for jewels,
15 if she had had any to wear. By this time it was the established hour for having tea; and Tackleton came back again, to share the meal, and spend the evening.

Caleb and Bertha had returned some time before, and Caleb had sat down to his afternoon's work. But he
20 couldn't settle to it, poor fellow, being anxious and remorseful for his daughter. It was touching to see him sitting idle on his working-stool, regarding her so wistfully; and always saying in his face, "Have I deceived her from her cradle, but to break her heart!"

When it was night, and tea was done, and Dot had nothing more to do in washing up the cups and saucers; in a word—for I must come to it, and there is no use in putting
25 it off—when the time drew nigh for expecting the Carrier's return in every sound of distant wheels; her manner changed again; her colour came and went; and she was
30 very restless. Not as good wives are, when listening for their husbands. No, no, no. It was another sort of restlessness from that.

Wheels heard. A horse's feet. The barking of a dog.
35 *The gradual approach of all the sounds. The scratching paw of Boxer at the door!*

"Whose step is that!" cried Bertha, starting up.

"Whose step?" returned the Carrier, standing in the entry, with his brown face ruddy as a winter berry from the keen night air. "Why, mine."

"The other step," said Bertha. "The man's tread betrays you!"

"She is not to be deceived," observed the Carrier, laughing. "Come along, Sir. You'll be welcome, never fear!" He spoke in a loud tone; and as he spoke, the deaf old gentleman entered.

"He's not so much a stranger, that you haven't seen him before, Caleb," said the Carrier. "You'll give him house-room till we go?"

"Oh, surely, John; and take it as an honour."

"He's the best company on earth, to talk secrets in," said John. "I have reasonable good lungs, but he tries to steal them from me, I can tell you. Sit down, Sir. All friends here, and glad to see you!"

When he had imparted this assurance, in a voice that fully corroborated what he had said about his lungs, he spoke in his natural tone, "A chair in the chimney-corner, I leave to sit quite silent and look pleasantly about him, as he likes. He's easily pleased."

Bertha had been listening intently. She called Caleb to her side, when he had set the chair, and asked him, in a low voice, to describe their visitor. When he had done so fully now; with scrupulous fidelity), she moved, for the first time since he had come in; and sighed; and seemed to have no further interest concerning him.

The Carrier was in high spirits, good fellow that he was; and more fonder of his little wife than ever.

"A clumsy Dot she was, this afternoon!" he said, encircling her with his rough arm, as she stood, removed from the rest; "and yet, I like her somehow. See yonder, Dot!" He pointed to the old man. She looked down. I think she trembled.

"He's—ha ha ha!—he's full of admiration for you!" the Carrier. "Talked of nothing else, the whole way! Why, he's a brave old boy. I like him for it!"

"I wish he had had a better subject, John," she said, an uneasy glance about the room; at Tackleton especially. "A better subject!" cried the jovial John. "There's such thing. Come! off with the great-coat, off with the thick shawl, off with the heavy wrappers! and a cosy hour by the fire! My humble service, Mistress. Ag at cribbage, you and I? That's hearty. The cards board, Dot. And a glass of beer here, if there's any small wife!"

His challenge was addressed to the old lady, who accepting it with gracious readiness, they were soon engaged in the game. At first, the Carrier looked about him sometimes, with a smile, or now and then called Dot to peep his shoulder at his hand, and advise him on some key point. But his adversary being a rigid disciplinarian, subject to an occasional weakness in respect to peg more than she was entitled to, required such vigilance on his part, as left him neither eyes nor ears to spare. To his whole attention gradually became absorbed upon cards; and he thought of nothing else, until a hand on his shoulder restored him to a consciousness of Tackleton.

"I am sorry to disturb you—but a word, directly."

"I'm going to deal," returned the Carrier. "It's a crisis."

"It is," said Tackleton. "Come here, man!"

There was that in his pale face which made the other immediately, and ask him, in a hurry, what the matter

"Hush! John Peerybingle," said Tackleton. "I'm sorry for this. I am indeed. I have been afraid of it have suspected it from the first."

"What is it?" asked the Carrier, with a frightened aspect.

"Hush! I'll show you, if you'll come with me."

The Carrier accompanied him, without another

cy went across a yard, where the stars were shining; l by a little side door, into Tackleton's own counting-
ise, where there was a glass window, commanding the
re-room: which was closed for the night. There was no
it in the counting-house itself, but there were lamps in
long narrow ware-room; and consequently the window
s bright.

'A moment!' said Tackleton. "Can you bear to look
ough that window, do you think?"

'Why not?' returned the Carrier.

'A moment more," said Tackleton. "Don't commit
violence. It's of no use. It's dangerous too. You're
strong-made man; and you might do Murder before
I know it."

The Carrier looked him in the face, and recoiled a step as
e had been struck. In one stride he was at the window,
he saw—

Oh Shadow on the Hearth! Oh truthful Cricket! Oh
fidious Wife!

He saw her, with the old man; old no longer, but erect
l gallant: bearing in his hand the false white hair that
l won his way into their desolate and miserable home.
saw her listening to him, as he bent his head to whisper
er ear; and suffering him to clasp her round the waist,
they move slowly down the dim wooden gallery towards
door by which they had entered it. He saw them stop,
l saw her turn—to have the face, the face he loved
so presented to his view!—and saw her, with her own
ids, adjust the Lie upon his head, laughing, as she did it,
is unsuspecting nature!

He clenched his strong right hand at first, as if it would
ve beaten down a lion. But opening it immediately
in, he spread it out before the eyes of Tackleton (for he
s tender of her, even then), and so, as they passed out,
down upon a desk, and was as weak as any infant.
e was wrapped up to the chin, and busy with his horse

and parcels, when she came into the room, prepared for going home.

"Now John dear! Good night, May! Good night, Bertha!"

5 Could she kiss them? Could she be blithe and cheerful in her parting? Could she venture to reveal her face to them without a blush? Yes. Tackleton observed her closely; and she did all this.

Tilly was hushing the baby; and she crossed and re-
10 crossed Tackleton, a dozen times, repeating drowsily:—

"Did the knowledge that it was to be its wives, then, wring its hearts almost to breaking; and did its fathers deceive it from its cradles but to break its hearts at last!"

"Now Tilly, give me the Baby. Good night, Mr. Tack-
15 leton. Where's John, for Goodness' sake?"

"He's going to walk, beside the horse's head," said Tackleton; who helped her to her seat.

"My dear John. Walk? To-night?"

The muffled figure of her husband made a hasty sign in
20 the affirmative; and the false stranger and the little nurse being in their places, the old horse moved off. Boxer, the unconscious Boxer, running on before, running back, running round and round the cart, and barking as triumphantly and merrily as ever.

25 When Tackleton had gone off likewise, escorting May and her mother home, poor Caleb sat down by the fire beside his daughter; anxious and remorseful at the core; and still saying in his wistful contemplation of her, "Have I deceived her from her cradle, but to break her heart at last?"

30 The toys that had been set in motion for the Baby, had all stopped and run down, long ago. In the faint light and silence, the imperturbably calm dolls; the agitated rocking horses with distended eyes and nostrils; the old gentlemen at the street doors, standing, half doubled up, upon their
35 failing knees and ankles; the wry-faced nut-crackers; the
peasants upon their way into the Ark, in twos, like

boarding-school out walking; might have been imagined
be stricken motionless with fantastic wonder, at Dot
ing false, or Tackleton beloved, under any combination
circumstances.

CHIRP THE THIRD

THE Dutch clock in the corner struck Ten, when the Carrier sat down by his fireside, So troubled and grief-worn that he seemed to scare the Cuckoo, who, having cut his ten melodious announcements as short as possible, plunged back into the Moorish Palace again, and clapped his little door behind him, as if the unwonted spectacles were too much for his feelings.

If the little Haymaker had been armed with the sharpest of scythes, and had cut at every stroke into the Carrier's heart, he never could have gashed and wounded it, as Doctor had done.

It was a heart so full of love for her; so bound up and held together by innumerable threads of winning remembrance spun from the daily working of her many qualities of charm and dearment; it was a heart in which she had enshrined herself so gently and so closely; a heart so single and so earnest in its Truth; so strong in right, so weak in wrong: that it could cherish neither passion nor revenge at first, and had only room to hold the broken image of its Idol.

But slowly, slowly; as the Carrier sat brooding on his hearth, now cold and dark; other and fiercer thoughts began to rise within him, as an angry wind comes rising in the night. The Stranger was beneath his outraged roof. Three steps would take him to his chamber-door. One blow would beat it in. "You might do Murder before you know it," Tackleton had said. How could it be Murder if he gave the Villain time to grapple with him hand to hand? He was the younger man.

It was an ill-timed thought, bad for the dark mood of his mind. It was an angry thought, goading him to some

ging act, that should change the cheerful house into a
ted place which lonely travellers would dread to pass
ght; and where the timid would see shadows strug-
in the ruined windows when the moon was dim, and
wild noises in the stormy weather.

was the younger man! Yes, yes; some lover who
von the heart that *he* had never touched. Some lover
early choice: of whom she had thought and dreamed:
hom she had pined and pined: when he had fancied
happy by his side. Oh agony to think of it!

had been above stairs with the Baby, getting it to

As he sat brooding on the hearth, she came close
e him, without his knowledge—in the turning of the
of his great misery, he lost all other sounds—and put
ttle stool at his feet. He only knew it, when he felt
and upon his own, and saw her looking up into his

th wonder? No. It was his first impression, and he
ain to look at her again, to set it right. No, not with
er. With an eager and inquiring look; but not with
er. At first it was alarmed and serious; then it
ged into a strange, wild, dreadful smile of recognition
s thoughts; then there was nothing but her clasped
s on her brow, and her bent head, and falling hair.

ough the power of Omnipotence had been his to wield
t moment, he had too much of its Diviner property of
y in his breast, to have turned one feather's weight of
inst her. But he could not bear to see her crouching

upon the little seat where he had often looked on her,
love and pride, so innocent and gay; and when she
and left him, sobbing as she went, he felt it a relief to
the vacant place beside him rather than her so long
shed presence. This in itself was anguish keener than
eminding *him* how desolate he was become, and how
eat bond of his life was rent asunder.

more he felt this, and the more he knew he could have

better borne to see her lying prematurely dead before him with their little child upon her breast, the higher and the stronger rose his wrath against his enemy. He looked about him for a weapon.

5 There was a Gun, hanging on the wall. He took it down, and moved a pace or two towards the door of the perfidious Stranger's room. He knew the Gun was loaded. Some shadowy idea that it was just to shoot this man like a Wild Beast, seized him, and dilated in his mind until it grew into a monstrous demon in complete possession of him, casting out all milder thoughts and setting up its undivided empire.

That phrase is wrong. Not casting out his milder thoughts, but artfully transforming them. Changing them into scourges to drive him on. Turning water into blood, Love into hate, Gentleness into blind ferocity. Her image, sorrowing, humbled, but still pleading to his tenderness and mercy with resistless power, never left his mind; but staying there, it urged him to the door; raised the weapon to his shoulder; fitted and nerved his finger to the trigger, and cried "Kill him! In his bed!"

He reversed the Gun to beat the stock upon the door; he already held it lifted in the air; some indistinct design was in his thoughts of calling out to him to fly, for God's sake by the window—

When, suddenly, the struggling fire illumined the whole chimney with a glow of light; and the Cricket on the Hearth began to chirp!

No sound he could have heard; no human voice, not even hers; could so have moved and softened him. The artless words in which she had told him of her love for this same Cricket, were once more freshly spoken; her trembling, earnest manner at the moment, was again before him, her pleasant voice—Oh what a voice it was, for making household music at the fireside of an honest man!

illed through and through his better nature, and awoke to life and action.

He recoiled from the door, like a man walking in his sleep, awakened from a frightful dream; and put the Gun aside. Clasp- ing his hands before his face, he then sat down again beside the fire, and found relief in tears.

The Cricket on the Hearth came out into the room, and stood in Fairy shape before him.

'I love it,' " said the Fairy Voice, repeating what he had remembered, " 'for the many times I have heard it, and the many thoughts its harmless music has given me.' "

'She said so!' " cried the Carrier. "True!"

'This has been a happy Home, John; and I love the Cricket for its sake! "

'It has been, Heaven knows," returned the Carrier. "I have made it happy, always,—until now."

'So gracefully sweet-tempered; so domestic, joyful, busy, and light-hearted!" said the Voice.

'Otherwise I never could have loved her as I did," repeated the Carrier.

The Voice, correcting him, said "do."

The Carrier repeated "as I did." But not firmly. His stinging tongue resisted his control, and would speak in its own way, for itself and him.

The Figure, in an attitude of invocation, raised its hand and said:

Upon your own hearth——"

The hearth she has blighted," interposed the Carrier.

The hearth she has—how often!—blessed and brightened," said the Cricket: "the hearth which, but for her, is only a few stones and bricks and rusty bars, but which has been, through her, the Altar of your Home; on which we have nightly sacrificed some petty passion, selfishness, care, and offered up the homage of a tranquil mind, a *kind nature, and an overflowing heart*; so that the smoke of this poor chimney has gone upward with a better

fragrance than the richest incense that is burnt before richest shrines in all the gaudy Temples of this World Upon your own hearth; in its quiet sanctuary; surrounded by its gentle influences and associations; hear!

5 Hear me! Hear everything that speaks the language of your hearth and home!"

"And pleads for her?" inquired the Carrier.

"All things that speak the language of your hearth and home, *must* plead for her!" returned the Cricket.

10 they speak the Truth."

And while the Carrier, with his head upon his hand, continued to sit meditating in his chair, the Presence stood beside him; suggesting his reflections by its power, and presenting them before him, as in a Glass or Picture. It was not a solitary Presence. From the hearth-stone, from the chimney; from the clock, the pipe, the kettle, and the cradle; from the floor, the walls, the ceiling, and the stable from the cart without, and the cupboard within, and the household implements; from every thing and every place with which she had ever been familiar, and with which she had ever entwined one recollection of herself in her unhappy husband's mind; Fairies came trooping forth. Not to stand beside him as the Cricket did, but to busy and beguile themselves. To do all honour to Her image. To point to him by the skirts, and point to it when it appeared. To cluster round it, and embrace it, and strew flowers for it to tread on. To try to crown its fair head with their tiny hands. To show that they were fond of it and loved it, and that there was not one ugly, wicked, or accusatory creature to claim knowledge of it—none but their playful and approving selves.

25 him by the skirts, and point to it when it appeared. To cluster round it, and embrace it, and strew flowers for it to tread on. To try to crown its fair head with their tiny hands. To show that they were fond of it and loved it, and that there was not one ugly, wicked, or accusatory creature to claim knowledge of it—none but their playful and approving selves.

30 creature to claim knowledge of it—none but their playful and approving selves.

His thoughts were constant to her image. It was always there.

She sat plying her needle, before the fire, and singing to herself. Such a blithe, thriving, steady little Dot! The figures turned upon him all at once, by one common

h one prodigious concentrated stare; and seemed to
"Is this the light wife you are mourning for?"

There were sounds of gaiety outside: musical instruments, and noisy tongues, and laughter. A crowd of
ing merry-makers came pouring in; among whom were 5
y Fielding and a score of pretty girls. Dot was the
rest of them all; as young as any of them too. They
re to summon her to join their party. It was a dance.
ver little foot were made for dancing, hers was, surely.
t she laughed and shook her head, and pointed to her 10
kery on the fire, and her table ready spread: with an
lting defiance that rendered her more charming than
was before. And so she merrily dismissed them: nod-
g to her would-be partners, one by one, as they passed
, with a comical indifference, enough to make them go 15
l drown themselves immediately if they were her ad-
vers—and they must have been so, more or less; they
ldn't help it. And yet indifference was not her charac-

Oh no! For presently, there came a certain Carrier
the door; and bless her, what a welcome she bestowed 20
on him!

Again the staring figures turned upon him all at once,
l seemed to say "Is this the wife who has forsaken you?"
A shadow fell upon the mirror or the picture: call it what
i will. A great shadow of the Stranger, as he first stood 25
lerneath their roof; covering its surface, and blotting
all other objects. But the nimble Fairies worked like
as to clear it off again; and Dot again was there. Still
ght and beautiful.

Rocking her little Baby in its cradle; singing to it softly; 30
l resting her head upon a shoulder which had its counter-
rt in the musing figure by which the Fairy Cricket stood.
The night—I mean the real night: not going by Fairy
cks—was wearing now; and in this stage of the Carrier's
ughts, the moon burst out, and shone brightly in the sky. 35
aps some calm and quiet light had risen also, in his

mind; and he could think more soberly of what had happened.

Although the shadow of the Stranger fell at intervals upon the glass—always distinct, and big, and thoroughly defined—it never fell so darkly as at first. Whenever it appeared, the Fairies uttered a general cry of consternation, and plied their little arms and legs, with inconceivable activity, to rub it out. And whenever they got at Dot again, and showed her to him once more, bright and beautiful, they cheered in the most inspiring manner.

They never showed her, otherwise than beautiful and bright, for they were Household Spirits to whom Falsehood is annihilation; and being so, what Dot was there for them, but the one active, beaming, pleasant little creature who had been the light and sun of the Carrier's Home!

The Fairies were prodigiously excited when they showed her, with the Baby, gossiping among a knot of sage old matrons, and affecting to be wondrous old and matronly herself, and leaning in a staid, demure old way upon her husband's arm, attempting—she! such a bud of a little woman—to convey the idea of having abjured the vanities of the world in general, and of being the sort of person to whom it was no novelty at all to be a mother; yet in the same breath, they showed her, laughing at the Carrier for being awkward, and pulling up his shirt-collar to make him smart, and mincing merrily about that very room to teach him how to dance.

They turned, and stared immensely at him when they showed her with the Blind Girl; for though she carried cheerfulness and animation with her, wheresoever she went, she bore those influences into Caleb Plummer's home, heaped up and running over. The Blind Girl's love for her, and trust in her, and gratitude to her; her own good busy way of setting Bertha's thanks aside; her dexterous little arts for filling up each moment of the visit in doing something useful to the house, and really working hard while feigning

oliday; her bountiful provision of those standing
 es, the Veal and Ham-Pie and the bottles of Beer;
 iant little face arriving at the door, and taking leave;
 nderful expression in her whole self, from her neat
 the crown of her head, of being a part of the estab- 5
 it—a something necessary to it, which it couldn't
 out; all this the Fairies revelled in, and loved her
 nd once again they looked upon him all at once,
 ngly; and seemed to say, while some among them
 in her dress and fondled her, "Is this the Wife who 10
 ayed your confidence?"

than once or twice, or thrice, in the long thoughtful
 hey showed her to him sitting on her favorite seat,
 r bent head, her hands clasped on her brow, her
 hair. As he had seen her last. And when they 15
 her thus, they neither turned nor looked upon him,
 thered close round her, and comforted and kissed
 d pressed on one another to show sympathy and
 ss to her: and forgot him altogether.

the night passed. The moon went down; the stars 20
 ale; the cold day broke; the sun rose. The Carrier
 , musing in the chimney corner. He had sat there,
 s head upon his hands all night. All night the

Cricket had been Chirp, Chirp, Chirping on the
 . All night he had listened to its voice. All night, 25
 behold Fairies had been busy with him. All night,
 l been amiable and blameless in the Glass, except
 at one shadow fell upon it.

ose up when it was broad day, and washed and
 himself. He couldn't go about his customary 30
 l avocations; he wanted spirit for them; but it mat-
 ie less, that it was Tackleton's wedding-day, and he
 ranged to make his rounds by proxy. He had
 t to have gone merrily to church with Dot. But such
 ere at an end. It was their own wedding-day too. 35
 little he had looked for such a close to such a year!

The Carrier expected that Tackleton would pay him an early visit; and he was right. He had not walked to and fro before his own door, many minutes, when he saw the Toy-merchant coming in his chaise along the road. As
5 the chaise drew nearer, he perceived that Tackleton was dressed out sprucely, for his marriage: and had decorated his horse's head with flowers and favours.

The horse looked much more like a Bridegroom than Tackleton: whose half-closed eye was more disagreeably
10 expressive than ever. But the Carrier took little heed of this. His thoughts had other occupation.

"John Peerybingle!" said Tackleton, with an air of condolence. "My good fellow, how do you find yourself this morning?"

15 "I have had but a poor night, Master Tackleton," returned the Carrier, shaking his head: "for I have been a good deal disturbed in my mind. But it's over now! Can you spare me half-an-hour or so, for some private talk?"

"I came on purpose," returned Tackleton, alighting.
20 "Never mind the horse. He'll stand quiet enough, with the reins over this post, if you'll give him a mouthful of hay."

The Carrier having brought it from his stable and set it before him, they turned into the house.

"You are not married before noon?" he said, "I think?"

25 "No," answered Tackleton. "Plenty of time. Plenty of time."

When they entered the kitchen, Tilly Slowboy was rapping at the Stranger's door; which was only removed from it by a few steps. One of her very red eyes (for Tilly had
30 been crying all night long, because her mistress cried) was at the keyhole; and she was knocking very loud; and seemed frightened.

"If you please I can't make nobody hear," said Tilly *looking round*. "I hope nobody an't gone and been and
' if you please!'

s philanthropic wish, Miss Slowboy emphasized with

rious new raps and kicks at the door; which led to no result whatever.

"Shall I go?" said Tackleton. "It's curious."

The Carrier, who had turned his face from the door, nodded to him to go if he would.

So Tackleton went to Tilly Slowboy's relief; and he too rapped and knocked; and he too failed to get the least reply. But he thought of trying the handle of the door; and as it opened easily, he peeped in, looked in, went in; and soon came running out again.

"John Peerybingle," said Tackleton, in his ear. "I hope there has been nothing—nothing rash in the night."

The Carrier turned upon him quickly.

"Because he's gone!" said Tackleton; "and the window's open. I don't see any marks—to be sure it's almost on a level with the garden: but I was afraid there might have been some—some scuffle. Eh?"

He nearly shut up the expressive eye altogether; he looked at him so hard. And he gave his eye, and his face, and his whole person, a sharp twist. As if he would have squeezed the truth out of him.

"Make yourself easy," said the Carrier. "He went into that room last night, without harm in word or deed from me; and no one has entered it since. He is away of his own free will. I'd go out gladly at that door, and beg my bread from house to house, for life, if I could so change the man that he had never come. But he has come and gone. And I have done with him!"

"Oh!—Well, I think he has got off pretty easy," said Tackleton, taking a chair.

The sneer was lost upon the Carrier, who sat down too: and shaded his face with his hand, for some little time, before proceeding.

"You showed me last night," he said at length, "my life; my wife that I love; secretly——"

"And tenderly," insinuated Tackleton.

"Conniving at that man's disguise, and giving him opportunities of meeting her alone. I think there's no sight I wouldn't have rather seen than that. I think there's no man in the world I wouldn't have rather had to show it me."

"I confess to having had my suspicions always," said Tackleton. "And that has made me objectionable here, I know."

"But as you did show it me," pursued the Carrier, not minding him; "and as you saw her; my wife; my wife that I love"—his voice, and eye, and hand, grew steadier and firmer as he repeated these words: evidently in pursuance of a steadfast purpose—"as you saw her at this disadvantage, it is right and just that you should also see with my eyes, and look into my breast, and know what my mind is, upon the subject. For it's settled," said the Carrier, regarding him attentively. "And nothing can shake it now."

Tackleton muttered a few general words of assent, about its being necessary to vindicate something or other; but he was overawed by the manner of his companion. Plain and unpolished as it was, it had a something dignified and noble in it, which nothing but the soul of generous Honour, dwelling in the man, could have imparted.

"I am a plain, rough man," pursued the Carrier, "with very little to recommend me. I am not a clever man, as you very well know. I am not a young man. I loved my little Dot, because I had seen her grow up, from a child, in her father's house; because I knew how precious she was; because she had been my Life, for years and years. There's many men I can't compare with, who never could have loved my little Dot like me, I think!"

He paused, and softly beat the ground a short time with his foot, before resuming:

"I often thought that though I wasn't good enough for her, I should make her a kind husband, and perhaps know *her value better* than another; and in this way I reconciled *it to myself*, and came to think it might be possible that we

d be married. And in the end it came about, and we married."

ah!" said Tackleton, with a significant shake of his

had studied myself; I had had experience of myself; 5
y how much I loved her, and how happy I should be,"
ed the Carrier. "But I had not—I feel it now—
ently considered her."

o be sure," said Tackleton. "Giddiness, frivolity,
ness, love of admiration! Not considered! All left 10
sight! Hah!"

ou had best not interrupt me," said the Carrier, with
sternness, "till you understand me; and you're wide
ng so. If, yesterday, I'd have struck that man down
low, who dared to breathe a word against her; to-day 15
t my foot upon his face, if he was my brother!"

e Toy-merchant gazed at him in astonishment. He
on in a softer tone:

id I consider," said the Carrier, "that I took her; at
ge, and with her beauty; from her young companions, 20
he many scenes of which she was the ornament; in
she was the brightest little star that ever shone; to
er up from day to day in my dull house, and keep my
is company? Did I consider how little suited I was
sprightly humour, and how wearisome a plodding 25
ike me must be, to one of her quick spirit; did I con-
that it was no merit in me, or claim in me, that I
her when everybody must, who knew her? Never.
advantage of her hopeful nature and her cheerful
sition; and I married her. I wish I never had! For 30
ke; not for mine!"

e Toy-merchant gazed at him, without winking.
the half-shut eye was open now.

even bless her!" said the Carrier, "for the cheerful
ncy with which she tried to keep the knowledge of
om me! And Heaven help me, that, in my slow

mind, I have not found it out before! Poor child! Poor Dot! I not to find it out, who have seen her eyes fill with tears, when such a marriage as our own was spoken of! I who have seen the secret trembling on her lips a hundred
5 times, and never suspected it, till last night! Poor girl! That I could ever hope she would be fond of me! That I could ever believe she was!"

"She made a show of it," said Tackleton. "She made such a show of it, that to tell you the truth it was the origin
10 of my misgivings."

And here he asserted the superiority of May Fielding, who certainly made no sort of show of being fond of *him*.

"She has tried," said the poor Carrier, with greater emotion than he had exhibited yet; "I only now begin to know
15 how hard she has tried; to be my dutiful and zealous wife. How good she has been; how much she has done; how brave and strong a heart she has; let the happiness I have known under this roof bear witness! It will be some help and comfort to me when I am here alone."

20 "Here alone?" said Tackleton. "Oh! Then you do mean to take some notice of this?"

"I mean," returned the Carrier, "to do her the greatest kindness, and make her the best reparation, in my power. I can release her from the pain daily of an unequal marriage, and the struggle to conceal it. She shall be as free
25 as I can render her."

"Make *her* reparation!" exclaimed Tackleton, twisting and turning his great ears with his hands. "There must be something wrong here. You didn't say that, of course."

30 The Carrier set his grip upon the collar of the Toy-merchant, and shook him like a reed.

"Listen to me!" he said. "And take care that you hear me right. Listen to me. Do I speak plainly?"

"Very plainly indeed," answered Tackleton.

"As if I meant it?"

"Very much as if you meant it."

"I sat upon that hearth, last night, all night," exclaimed the Carrier. "On the spot where she has often sat beside me, with her sweet face looking into mine. I called up my whole life, day by day; I had her dear self, in its every stage, in review before me. And upon my soul she is innocent, if there is One to judge the innocent and the guilty!"

"Faithful Cricket on the Hearth! royal household Fairies! 'Passion and distrust have left me!" said the Carrier; "and nothing but my grief remains. In an unhappy moment some old lover, better suited to her tastes and years than I; forsaken, perhaps, for me, against her will; returned. In an unhappy moment: taken by surprise, and wanting time to think of what she did: she made herself a party to the treachery, by concealing it. Last night she saw him in the interview we witnessed. It was wrong. But other than this, she is innocent if there is Truth on earth!"

"If that is your opinion——" Tackleton began.

"So, let her go!" pursued the Carrier. "Go, with my forgiveness for the many happy hours she has given me, and forgiveness for any pang she has caused me. Let her go and have the peace of mind I wish her! She'll never hurt me. She'll learn to like me better, when I'm not a weight upon her, and she wears the chain I have riveted, so lightly. This is the day on which I took her, with so much thought for her enjoyment, from her home. To-day she will return to it; and I will trouble her no more. Her father and mother will be here to-day—we had made a little plan for keeping it together—and they shall take her home. I can trust her, there, or anywhere. She leaves me without blame, and she will live so I am sure. If I should die—perhaps while she is still young; I have lost some courage in a few hours—she'll find that I remembered her, I loved her to the last! This is the end of what you have wronged me. Now, it's over!"

"Oh no, John, not over. Do not say it's over yet! Not

quite yet. I have heard your noble words. I could not steal away, pretending to be ignorant of what has affected me with such deep gratitude. Do not say it's over till the clock has struck again!"

5 She had entered shortly after Tackleton; and had remained there. She never looked at Tackleton, but fixed her eyes upon her husband. But she kept away from him, setting as wide a space as possible between them; and though she spoke with most impassioned earnestness, she
10 went no nearer to him even then. How different in this, from her old self!

"No hand can make the clock which will strike again for me the hours that are gone," replied the Carrier, with a faint smile. "But let it be so, if you will my dear. It will
15 strike soon. It's of little matter what we say. I'd try to please you in a harder case than that."

"Well!" muttered Tackleton. "I must be off, for when the clock strikes again, it'll be necessary for me to be upon my way to church. Good morning, John Peerybingle.
20 I'm sorry to be deprived of the pleasure of your company. Sorry for the loss, and the occasion of it too!"

"I have spoken plainly?" said the Carrier, accompanying him to the door.

"Oh, quite!"

25 "And you'll remember what I have said?"

"Why, if you compel me to make the observation," said Tackleton; previously taking the precaution of getting into his chaise; "I must say that it was so very unexpected, that I'm far from being likely to forget it."

30 "The better for us both," returned the Carrier. "Good bye. I give you joy!"

"I wish I could give it to *you*," said Tackleton. "As I *can't*; thank'ee. Between ourselves (as I told you before, eh?) I don't much think I shall have the less joy in my married life, because May hasn't been too officious about it

too demonstrative. Good bye! Take care of your-

The Carrier stood looking after him until he was smaller than his horse's flowers and favours near at hand; and then, with a deep sigh, went strolling like a restless, broken man, among some neighbouring elms; unwilling to return until the clock was on the eve of striking.

His little wife, being left alone, sobbed piteously; but she dried her eyes and checked herself, to say how good was, how excellent he was! and once or twice she laughed; so heartily, triumphantly, and incoherently (still laughing all the time), that Tilly was quite horrified.

"Ow if you please don't!" said Tilly. "It's enough to find and bury the Baby, so it is if you please."

"Will you bring him sometimes, to see his father, Tilly," said the mistress; drying her eyes; "when I can't live any more, and have gone to my old home?"

"Ow if you please don't!" cried Tilly, throwing back her head, and bursting into a howl; she looked at the moment commonly like Boxer; "Ow if you please don't! Ow, it has everybody gone and been and done with everybody, making everybody else so wretched! Ow-w-w-w!"

The soft-hearted Slowboy trailed off at this juncture, with such a deplorable howl: the more tremendous from its suppression: that she must infallibly have awakened the

Baby, and frightened him into something serious (probably convulsions), if her eyes had not encountered the Plummer, leading in his daughter. This spectacle bringing her to a sense of the proprieties, she stood for some moments silent, with her mouth wide open: and then going off to the bed on which the Baby lay asleep, crept in a weird, Saint Vitus manner on the floor, and at the same time rummaged with her face and head among bedclothes: apparently deriving much relief from those ordinary operations.

"Tilly!" said Bertha. "Not at the marriage!"

"I told her you would not be there, Mum," whispered Caleb. "I heard as much last night. But bless you," said the little man, taking her tenderly by both hands, "I don't care for what they say; I don't believe them. There ain't
 5 much of me but that little should be torn to pieces sooner than I'd trust a word against you!"

He put his arms about her neck and hugged her, as a child might have hugged one of his own dolls.

"Bertha couldn't stay at home this morning," said Caleb.
 10 "She was afraid, I know, to hear the Bells ring; and couldn't trust herself to be so near them on their wedding-day. So we started in good time, and came here. I have been thinking of what I have done," said Caleb, after a moment's pause; "I have been blaming myself till I hardly
 15 knew what to do or where to turn, for the distress of mind I have caused her; and I have come to the conclusion that I'd better, if you'll stay with me, Mum, the while, tell her the truth. You'll stay with me the while?" he inquired, trembling from head to foot, "I don't know what effect it may
 20 have upon her; I don't know what she'll think of me; I don't know that she'll ever care for her poor father afterwards. But it's best for her that she should be undeceived; and I must bear the consequences as I deserve!"

"Mary," said Bertha, "where is your hand! Ah! Here
 25 it is; here it is!" pressing it to her lips, with a smile, and drawing it through her arm. "I heard them speaking softly among themselves, last night, of some blame against you. They were wrong."

The Carrier's Wife was silent. Caleb answered for her.
 30 "They were wrong," he said.

"I knew it!" cried Bertha, proudly. "I told them so. I scorned to hear a word! Blame *her* with justice!" she pressed the hand between her own, and the soft cheek
 against her face. "No! I am not so Blind as that."

Her father went on one side of her, while Dot, remained
 35 on the other: holding her hand.

"I know you all," said Bertha, "better than you think. But none so well as her. Not even you father. There is nothing half so real and so true about me, as she is. If I could be restored to sight this instant, and not a word were spoken, I could choose her from a crowd! My sister!" 5

"Bertha, my dear!" said Caleb, "I have something on my mind I want to tell you, while we three are alone. Hear me kindly! I have a confession to make to you, my Darling."

"A confession, father?" 10

"I have wandered from the Truth and lost myself, my child," said Caleb, with a pitiable expression in his bewildered face. "I have wandered from the Truth, intending to be kind to you; and have been cruel."

She turned her wonder-stricken face towards him, and repeated "Cruel!" 15

"He accuses himself too strongly, Bertha," said Dot. "You'll say so, presently. You'll be the first to tell him so."

"He cruel to me!" cried Bertha, with a smile of incredulity. 20

"Not meaning it, my child," said Caleb. "But I have been; though I never suspected it, till yesterday. My dear Blind Daughter, hear me and forgive me! The world you live in, heart of mine, doesn't exist as I have represented it. The eyes you have trusted in, have been false to you." 25

She turned her wonder-stricken face towards him still; but drew back, and clung closer to her friend.

"Your road in life was rough, my poor one," said Caleb, "and I meant to smooth it for you. I have altered objects, changed the characters of people, invented many things that never have been, to make you happier. I have had concealments from you, put deceptions on you, God forgive me! and surrounded you with fancies." 30

"But living people are not fancies?" she said hurriedly, 35

and turning very pale, and still retiring from him. "You can't change them."

"I have done so, Bertha," pleaded Caleb. "There one person that you know, my Dove——"

- 5 "Oh father! why do you say, I know?" she answered in a tone of keen reproach. "What and whom do know! I who have no leader! I so miserably blind!"

In the anguish of her heart, she stretched out her hands as if she were groping her way; then spread them, in
10 manner most forlorn and sad, upon her face.

"The marriage that takes place to-day," said Caleb, with a stern, sordid, grinding man. A hard master to you and me, my dear, for many years. Ugly in his looks, and in his nature. Cold and callous always. Unlike what
15 have painted him to you in everything, my child. everything."

"Oh why," cried the Blind Girl, tortured, as it seemed almost beyond endurance, "why did you ever do this? Why did you ever fill my heart so full, and then come
20 like Death, and tear away the objects of my love! O Heaven, how blind I am! How helpless and alone!"

Her afflicted father hung his head, and offered no reply but in his penitence and sorrow.

She had been but a short time in this passion of regret
25 when the Cricket on the Hearth, unheard by all but herself, began to chirp. Not merrily, but in a low, faint, sorrowful way. It was so mournful, that her tears began to flow; and when the Presence which had been beside the Carrier all night, appeared behind her, pointing to her father, the tears
30 fell down like rain.

She heard the Cricket-voice more plainly soon; and more conscious, through her blindness, of the Presence hovering about her father.

"Mary," said the Blind Girl, "tell me what my home
35 *What it truly is.*"

"It is a poor place, Bertha; very poor and bare in

The house will scarcely keep out wind and rain another winter. It is as roughly shielded from the weather, Bertha," Dot continued in a low, clear voice, "as your poor father in his sackcloth coat."

The Blind Girl, greatly agitated, rose, and led the Carrier's little wife aside. 5

"Those presents that I took such care of; that came almost at my wish, and were so dearly welcome to me," she said, trembling; "where did they come from! Did you send them?" 10

"No."

"Who then?"

Dot saw that she knew, already; and was silent. The Blind Girl spread her hands before her face again. But in quite another manner now. 15

"Dear Mary, a moment. One moment! More this way. Speak softly to me. You are true, I know. You'd not deceive me now; would you?"

"No, Bertha, indeed!"

"No, I am sure you would not. You have too much pity for me. Mary look across the room to where we were just now; to where my father is—my father, so compassionate and loving to me—and tell me what you see." 20

"I see," said Dot, who understood her well; "an old man sitting in a chair, and leaning sorrowfully on the back, 25 with his face resting on his hand. As if his child should comfort him, Bertha."

"Yes, yes. She will. Go on."

"He is an old man, worn with care and work. He is a spare, dejected, thoughtful, grey-haired man. I see him 30 now, despondent and bowed down, and striving against nothing. But, Bertha, I have seen him many times before; and striving hard in many ways for one great sacred object. And I honour his grey head, and bless him!"

The Blind Girl broke away from her; and throwing 35

herself upon her knees before him, took the grey head to her breast.

"It is my sight restored .It is my sight!" she cried. "I have been blind, and now my eyes are open. I never
5 knew him! To think I might have died, and never truly seen the father, who has been so loving to me!"

There were no words for Caleb's emotion.

"There is not a gallant figure on this earth," exclaimed the Blind Girl, holding him in her embrace, "that I would
1 love so dearly, and would cherish so devotedly, as this! The greyer, and more worn, the dearer, father! Never let them say I am blind again. There's not a furrow in his face, there's not a hair upon his head, that shall be forgotten in my prayers and thanks to Heaven!"

5 Caleb managed to articulate "My Bertha!"

"And in my Blindness I believed him," said the girl, caressing him with tears of exquisite affection, "to be so different! And having him beside me, day by day, so
mindful of me always, never dreamed of this!"

9 "The fresh smart father in the blue coat, Bertha," said poor Caleb. "He's gone!"

"Nothing is gone," she answered. "Dearest father, no! Everything is here—in you. The father that I loved
so well; the father that I never loved enough, and never
15 knew; the Benefactor whom I first began to reverence and love, because he had such sympathy for me; All are here in you. Nothing is dead to me. The Soul of all that was most dear to me is here—here, with the worn face, and the grey head. And I am NOT blind, father, any
20 longer!"

Dot's whole attention had been concentrated, during this discourse, upon the father and daughter; but looking, now, towards the little Haymaker in the Moorish meadow, she saw that the clock was within a few minutes of striking; and fell, immediately, into a nervous and excited state.

"Father," said Bertha, hesitating. "Mary."

"Yes, my dear," returned Caleb. "Here she is."

"There is no change in *her*. You never told me anything of *her* that was not true?"

"I should have done it, my dear, I am afraid," returned Caleb, "if I could have made her better than she was. 5
But I must have changed her for the worse, if I had changed her at all. Nothing could improve her, Bertha." Confident as the Blind Girl had been when she asked the question, her delight and pride in the reply and her renewed embrace of Dot, were charming to behold. 10

"More changes than you think for, may happen though, my dear," said Dot. "Changes for the better, I mean; changes for great joy to some of us. You mustn't let them trouble you too much, if any such should ever happen, and affect you? Are those wheels upon the road? You've a 15
quick ear, Bertha. Are they wheels?"

"Yes. Coming very fast."

"I—I—I know you have a quick ear," said Dot, placing her hand upon her heart, and evidently talking on, as fast as she could, to hide its palpitating state, "because I have noticed it often, and because you were so quick to find out that strange step last night. Though why you should have said, as I well recollect you did say, Bertha, 'Whose step is that?' and why you should have taken any greater observation of it than of any other step, I don't know. 25
Though as I said just now, there are great changes in the world: great changes: and we can't do better than prepare ourselves to be surprised at hardly anything."

Caleb wondered what this meant; perceiving that she spoke to him, no less than to his daughter. He saw her, with astonishment, so fluttered and distressed that she could scarcely breathe; and holding to a chair, to save herself from falling. 30

"They are wheels indeed!" she panted. "Coming nearer! Nearer! Very close! And now you hear them 35
tapping at the garden-gate! And now you hear a step

outside the door—the same step, Bertha, is it not!—and now!—”

She uttered a wild cry of uncontrollable delight; and running up to Caleb put her hands upon his eyes, as a
5 young man rushed into the room, and flinging away his hat into the air, came sweeping down upon them.

“Is it over?” cried Dot.

“Yes!”

“Happily over?”

10 “Yes!”

“Do you recollect the voice, dear Caleb? Did you ever hear the like of it before?” cried Dot.

“If my boy in the Golden South Americas was alive”—said Caleb, trembling.

15 “He is alive!” shrieked Dot, removing her hands from his eyes, and clapping them in ecstasy; “look at him! See where he stands before you, healthy and strong! Your own dear son! Your own dear living, loving brother, Bertha!”

20 All honour to the little creature for her transports! All honour to her tears and laughter, when the three were locked in one another’s arms! All honour to the heartiness with which she met the sunburnt sailor-fellow, with his dark streaming hair, half way, and never turned her
25 rosy little mouth aside, but suffered him to kiss it, freely, and to press her to his bounding heart!

And honour to the Cuckoo too—why not!—for bursting out of the trap-door in the Moorish Palace like a house-breaker, and hiccoughing twelve times on the assembled
30 company, as if he had got drunk for joy!

The Carrier, entering, started back: and well he might: to find himself in such good company.

“Look, John!” said Caleb, exultingly, “look here! My own boy from the Golden South Americas! My own son!
35 *Him that you fitted out, and sent away yourself; him that were always such a friend to!*”

The Carrier advanced to seize him by the hand; but seeing, as some feature in his face awakened a remembrance of the Deaf Man in the Cart, said: "Edward! Was you?"

Now tell him all!" cried Dot. "Tell him all, Edward; 5
don't spare me, for nothing shall make me spare myself in his eyes, ever again."

I was the man," said Edward.

And could you steal, disguised, into the house of your friend?" rejoined the Carrier. "There was a frank 10
once—how many years is it, Caleb, since we heard that was dead, and had it proved, we thought?—who never would have done that."

There was a generous friend of mine, once: more a father to me than a friend," said Edward, "Who never 15
would have judged me, or any other man, unheard. You see he. So I am certain you will hear me now."

The Carrier, with a troubled glance at Dot, who still stood far away from him, replied "Well! that's but fair. I 20
,"

You must know that when I left here, a boy," said Edward, "I was in love: and my love was returned. She was a very young girl, who perhaps (you may tell me) didn't follow her own mind. But I knew mine; and I had a passion for her." 25

You had!" exclaimed the Carrier. "You!"

Indeed I had," returned the other. "And she returned my love. I have ever since believed she did; and now I am sure she did."

Heaven help me!" said the Carrier. "This is worse 30
than all."

Constant to her," said Edward, "and returning, full of love, after many hardships and perils, to redeem my part of an old contract, I heard, twenty miles away, that she was gone to me; that she had forgotten me; and had bestowed herself upon another and a richer man. I had no mind to

reproach her; but I wished to see her, and to prove beyond dispute that this was true. I hoped she might have been forced into it, against her own desire and recollection. It would be small comfort, but it would be some, I thought: and on I came. That I might have the truth, the real truth; observing freely for myself, and judging for myself, without obstruction on the one hand, or presenting my own influence (if I had any) before her, on the other; I dressed myself unlike myself—you know how; and waited on the road—you know where. You had no suspicion of me; neither had—had she,” pointing to Dot, “until I whispered in her ear at that fireside, and she so nearly betrayed me.”

“But when she knew that Edward was alive, and had come back,” sobbed Dot, now speaking for herself, as she had burned to do, all through this narrative; “and when she knew his purpose, she advised him by all means to keep his secret close; for his old friend John Peerybingle was much too open in his nature, and too clumsy in all artifice—being a clumsy man, in general,” said Dot, half laughing and half crying—“to keep it for him. And when she—that’s me, John,” sobbed the little woman—“told him all, and how his sweetheart had believed him to be dead; and how she had at last been over-persuaded by her mother into a marriage which the silly, dear old thing called advantageous; and when she—that’s me again, John—told him they were not yet married (though close upon it), and that it would be nothing but a sacrifice if it went on, for there was no love on her side; and when he went nearly mad with joy to hear it; then she—that’s me again—said she would go between them, as she had often done before in old times, John, and would sound his sweetheart and be sure that what she—me again, John—said and thought *was right*. And it *was* right, John! And they were *brought together*, John! And they were married, John, *ago!* And here’s the Bride! And Gruff and Tackle-

on may die a bachelor! And I'm a happy little woman, May, God bless you!"

She was an irresistible little woman, if that be anything to her purpose; and never so completely irresistible as in her present transports. There never were congratulations so 5
 endearing and delicious, as those she lavished on herself and on the Bride.

Amid the tumult of emotions in his breast, the honest carrier had stood, confounded. Flying, now, towards her, Dot stretched out her hand to stop him, and retreated 10
 before.

"No, John, no! Hear all! Don't love me any more, John, till you've heard every word I have to say. It was wrong to have a secret from you, John. I'm very sorry. I don't think it any harm, till I came and sat down by you 15
 on the little stool last night; but when I knew by what was written in your face, that you had seen me walking in the gallery with Edward, and knew what you thought; I felt how giddy and how wrong it was. But oh, dear John, how could you, could you, think so!" 20

Little woman, how she sobbed again! John Peerybingle could have caught her in his arms. But no; she wouldn't touch him.

"Don't love me yet, please, John! Not for a long time yet! When I was sad about this intended marriage, dear, 25
 was because I remembered May and Edward such young lovers; and knew that her heart was far away from Tackleton. You believe that, now. Don't you, John?"

John was going to make another rush at this appeal; but he stopped him again. 30

"No; keep there, please, John! When I laugh at you, as sometimes do, John; and call you clumsy, and a dear old goose, and names of that sort, it's because I love you, John, well; and take such pleasure in your ways; and wouldn't 35
 you altered in the least respect to have you made a beggar to-morrow."

"Hooroar!" said Caleb with unusual vigour. "My opinion!"

"And when I speak of people being middle-aged, and steady, John, and pretend that we are a humdrum couple, 5 going on in a jog-trot sort of way, it's only because I'm such a silly little thing, John, that I like, sometimes, to act a kind of Play with Baby, and all that: and make believe."

She saw that he was coming; and stopped him again. But she was very nearly too late.

10 "No, don't love me for another minute or two, if you please, John! What I want most to tell you, I have kept to the last. My dear, good, generous John; when we were talking the other night about the Cricket, I had it on my lips to say, that at first I did not love you quite so dearly as 15 I do now; that when I first came home here, I was half afraid I mightn't learn to love you every bit as well as I hoped and prayed I might—being so very young, John. But, dear John, every day and hour, I loved you more and more. And if I could have loved you better than I do, 20 the noble words I heard you say this morning, would have made me. But I can't. All the affection that I had (it was a great deal, John) I gave you, as you well deserve, long, long ago, and I have no more left to give. Now, my dear Husband, take me to your heart again! That's 25 my home, John; and never, never think of sending me to any other!"

You never will derive so much delight from seeing a glorious little woman in the arms of a third party, as you would have felt if you had seen Dot run into the Carrier's 30 embrace. It was the most complete, unmitigated, soul-fraught little piece of earnestness that ever you beheld in all your days.

You may be sure the Carrier was in a state of perfect rapture; and you may be sure Dot was likewise; and you 35 may be sure they all were, inclusive of Miss Slowboy, who cried copiously for joy, and, wishing to include her young

large in the general interchange of congratulations, landed round the Baby to everybody in succession, as if it were something to drink.

But now the sound of wheels was heard again outside the door; and somebody exclaimed that Gruff and Tackleton was coming back. Speedily that worthy gentleman appeared: looking warm and flustered.

"Why, what the Devil's this, John Peerybingle!" said Tackleton. "There's some mistake. I appointed Mrs. Tackleton to meet me at the church; and I'll swear I passed her on the road, on her way here. Oh! here she is! I beg your pardon, Sir; I haven't the pleasure of knowing you; but if you can do me the favour to spare this young lady, he has rather a particular engagement this morning."

"But I can't spare her," returned Edward. "I couldn't think of it."

"What do you mean, you vagabond?" said Tackleton.

"I mean, that as I can make allowance for your being excited," returned the other, with a smile, "I am as deaf to harsh discourse this morning, as I was to all discourse last night."

The look that Tackleton bestowed upon him, and the tart he gave!

"I am sorry, Sir," said Edward, holding out May's left hand, and especially the third finger; "that the young lady can't accompany you to church; but as she has been there once, this morning, perhaps you'll excuse her."

Tackleton looked hard at the third finger; and took a little piece of silver paper, apparently containing a ring, from his waistcoat pocket.

"Miss Slowboy," said Tackleton. "Will you have the kindness to throw that in the fire? Thank'ee."

"It was a previous engagement: quite an old engagement: that prevented my wife from keeping her appointment with you, I assure you," said Edward.

"Mr. Tackleton will do me the justice to acknowledge

that I revealed it to him faithfully; and that I told him many times, I never could forget it," said May, blushing.

"Oh certainly!" said Tackleton. "Oh to be sure. Oh it's all right. It's quite correct. Mrs. Edward Plummer, 5 I infer?"

"That's the name," returned the bridegroom.

"Ah, I shouldn't have known you, Sir," said Tackleton: scrutinizing his face narrowly, and making a low bow. "I give you joy, Sir!"

10 "Thank'ee."

"Mrs. Peerybingle," said Tackleton, turning suddenly to where she stood with her husband; "I am sorry. You haven't done me a very great kindness, but, upon my life I am sorry. You are better than I thought you. John 15 Peerybingle, I am sorry. You understand me; that's enough. It's quite correct, ladies and gentlemen all, and perfectly satisfactory. Good morning!"

With these words he carried it off, and carried himself off too: merely stopping at the door, to take the flowers and 20 favours from his horse's head, and to kick that animal once in the ribs, as a means of informing him that there was a screw loose in his arrangements.

Of course it became a serious duty now, to make such a day of it, as should mark these events for a high Feast and 25 Festival in the Peerybingle Calendar for evermore. Accordingly, Dot went to work to produce such an entertainment, as should reflect undying honour on the house and every one concerned; and in a very short space of time, she was up to her dimpled elbows in flour, and whitening the 30 Carrier's coat, every time he came near her, by stopping him to give him a kiss. That good fellow washed the greens, and peeled the turnips, and broke the plates, and upset iron pots full of cold water on the fire, and made himself useful in all sorts of ways: while a couple of professional 35 assistants, hastily called in from somewhere in the neighbourhood, as on a point of life or death, ran against each

other in all the doorways and round all the corners; and everybody tumbled over Tilly Slowboy and the Baby, everywhere. Tilly never came out in such force before. Her ubiquity was the theme of general admiration. She was a stumbling-block in the passage at five-and-twenty minutes past two; a man-trap in the kitchen at half-past two precisely; and a pitfall in the garret at five-and-twenty minutes to three. The Baby's head was, as it were, a test and touchstone for every description of matter, animal, vegetable, and mineral. Nothing was in use that day that didn't come, at some time or other, into close acquaintance with it.

Then, there was a great Expedition set on foot to go and find out Mrs. Fielding; and to be dismally penitent to that excellent gentlewoman; and to bring her back, by force if needful, to be happy and forgiving. And when the Expedition first discovered her, she would listen to no terms at all, but said, an unspeakable number of times, that ever she should have lived to see the day! and couldn't be got to say anything else, except "Now carry me to the grave;" which seemed absurd, on account of her not being dead, or anything at all like it. After a time, she lapsed into a state of dreadful calmness, and observed, that when that unfortunate train of circumstances had occurred in the Indigo Trade, she had foreseen that she would be exposed, during her whole life, to every species of insult and contumely; and that she was glad to find it was the case; and begged they wouldn't trouble themselves about her,—for what was she? oh, dear! a nobody!—but would forget that such a being lived, and would take their course in life without her. From this bitterly sarcastic mood, she passed into an angry one, in which she gave vent to the remarkable expression that the worm would turn if trodden on; and after that, she yielded to a soft regret, and said, if they had *only given her their confidence, what might she not have had it in her power to suggest!* Taking advantage of the

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been telling them various marvels concerning mines, and Mexicans, and gold dust, took it in his head to jump up from a dance; for Bertha's harp was there, and upon it as you seldom hear. Dot (affectation when she chose) said her lover; I think because the Carrier was all she liked sitting by him, best. Mrs. Lane, of course, but to say her dancing was that; and everybody said the same, 10
was ready.

Heard get up, amid great applause, to Bertha plays her liveliest tune. Believe me, they have not been dancing suddenly the Carrier flings his pipe 15 and the waist, dashes out into the room, her, toe and heel, quite wonderfully. He sees this, than he skims across to Mrs. around the waist, and follows suit. Old this, than up he is, all alive, whisks off 20 middle of the dance, and is the foremost. When he sees this, than he clutches Tilly hands and goes off at score; Miss Slow- that diving hotly in among the other getting any number of concussions with principle of footing it. 25

Cricket joins the music with its Chirp, How the Kettle hums!

* * * * *

Even as I listen to them, blithely, and 30 for one last glimpse of a little figure very and the rest have vanished into air, and A Cricket sings upon the Hearth; a lies upon the ground; and nothing else

sweetened, more or less, by coming face to face with such a man as you. Caleb! This unconscious little nurse gave me a broken hint last night, of which I have found the thread. I blush to think how easily I might have bound
5 you and your daughter to me; and what a miserable idiot I was, when I took her for one! Friends, one and all, my house is very lonely to-night. I have not so much as a Cricket on my Hearth. I have scared them all away. Be gracious to me; let me join this happy party!"

10 He was at home in five minutes. You never saw such a fellow. What *had* he been doing with himself all his life, never to have known, before, his great capacity of being jovial! Or what had the Fairies been doing with him, to have effected such a change!

15 "John! you won't send me home this evening; will you?" whispered Dot.

He had been very near it though!

There wanted but one living creature to make the party complete; and, in the twinkling of an eye, there he was:
20 very thirsty with hard running, and engaged in hopeless endeavours to squeeze his head into a narrow pitcher. He had gone with the cart to its journey's end, very much disgusted with the absence of his master, and stupendously rebellious to the Deputy. After lingering about the stable
25 for some little time, vainly attempting to incite the old horse to the mutinous act of returning on his own account, he had walked into the tap-room and laid himself down before the fire. But suddenly yielding to the conviction that the Deputy was a humbug, and must be abandoned,
30 he had got up again, turned tail, and come home.

There was a dance in the evening. With which general mention of that recreation, I should have left it alone, if I had not some reason to suppose that it was quite an
original dance, and one of a most uncommon figure. It was
35 *formed in an odd way*; in this way.

Edward, that sailor-fellow—a good free dashing sort of a

fellow he was—had been telling them various marvels concerning parrots, and mines, and Mexicans, and gold dust, when all at once he took it in his head to jump up from his seat and propose a dance; for Bertha's harp was there, and she had such a hand upon it as you seldom hear. Dot (sly little piece of affectation when she chose) said her dancing days were over; *I* think because the Carrier was smoking his pipe, and she liked sitting by him, best. Mrs. Fielding had no choice, of course, but to say her dancing days were over after that; and everybody said the same, except May; May was ready. 10

So May and Edward get up, amid great applause, to dance alone; and Bertha plays her liveliest tune.

Well! if you'll believe me, they have not been dancing five minutes, when suddenly the Carrier flings his pipe away, takes Dot round the waist, dashes out into the room, and starts off with her, toe and heel, quite wonderfully. Tackleton no sooner sees this, than he skims across to Mrs. Fielding, takes her round the waist, and follows suit. Old Dot no sooner sees this, than up he is, all alive, whisks off Mrs. Dot in the middle of the dance, and is the foremost there. Caleb no sooner sees this, than he clutches Tilly Slowboy by both hands and goes off at score; Miss Slowboy, firm in the belief that diving hotly in among the other couples, and effecting any number of concussions with them, is your only principle of footing it. 20

Hark! how the Cricket joins the music with its Chirp, Chirp, Chirp; and how the Kettle hums!

* * * * *

But what is this! Even as I listen to them, blithely, and turn towards Dot, for one last glimpse of a little figure very pleasant to me, she and the rest have vanished into air, and I am left alone. A Cricket sings upon the Hearth; a broken child's-toy lies upon the ground; and nothing else remains. 30

NOTES

THE CHRISTMAS CAROL

1. **page 31. Christmas Carol.** A song or ballad of joy celebrating the birth of Christ. In England bands of men and children go about from door to door on Christmas eve singing ballads and taking part in the Christmas games and "mummings."

Note that the chapter divisions are called "staves;" in "The Cricket on the Hearth" they are called "chirps."

'**Change.** Abbreviation for exchange, the Royal Exchange, the centre of London commerce, lying between Threadneedle and Cornhill streets. Opposite on the N. W. is the Bank of England; to the S. W. is the Mansion House, (See Note 39. 10.) Over the doorway of the Exchange is the inscription:

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."

Scrooge's counting house was in this vicinity. "Upon 'Change" is often used as a general term meaning a place where men meet to transact business.

1 **Hamlet's Father.** See Shakspeare's play, "Hamlet"; or the story in Lamb's "Tales from Shakspeare."

St. Paul's Churchyard. The street round St. Paul's Cathedral. The coffee-houses formerly in this street were the resort of famous authors and publishers. The cathedral is about half a mile west of the Royal Exchange.

1 **Bedlam.** The hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem (the name Bethlehem corrupted to Bedlam) in London, founded in 1247; afterwards used as an asylum for lunatics. Bedlam is used as a synonym for madhouse.

1 **Union Workhouse.** A poorhouse supported by several parishes. See early chapters of "Oliver Twist."

5 **Poor Law.** The body of laws passed by Parliament for the relief of the poor. The law Scrooge had in mind was probably that passed by the Reformed Parliament in 1834.

5 **Links.** A torch made of tow (lint, link) and pitch, carried by "link-boys" for lighting the streets. They are still used in London in towns.

1 **Mansion House.** The official residence of the Lord Mayor of London.

39. 18 Saint Dunstan. An English monk of the tenth century. He became the chief advisor of King Eadred and King Eadgar, and by the latter was created Archbishop of Canterbury. Legend says that he was a skilful worker in metals, and that he was tempted whilst at his forge by the Devil in the guise of a woman; whereupon the good saint seized the Evil Spirit by the nose with his glowing tongs.

39. 26 God bless you. A famous old carol, which begins;

"God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day,
To save us all from Satan's pow'r
When we were gone astray;

(Chorus.) O tidings of comfort and joy."

40. 19 Cornhill. A street which derives its name from the fact that a corn market was once held here. (cf. Haymarket.) The Royal Exchange, Mansion House, Cornhill, and St. Paul's Cathedral are all in the district of the old City of London, while

40. 21 Camden Town is in the northern part of modern London, east of Regent's Park.

41. 5 Knocker. "It (the front door) was ornamented with a gorgeous brass knocker, curiously wrought, sometimes in the device of a dog and sometimes of a lion's head." Irving; Knickerbocker.

42. 35 Upon the hob. When the old broad open fireplaces in which wood was burned were first fitted with grates for the burning of coal, a structure was inserted to diminish the width. The top of this structure, the *hob*, formed a level space upon which saucepans and other utensils could be set and kept hot.

43. 3 Dutch merchant. After the revolution of 1688 which put William, the Stadtholder of the United Netherlands, on the English throne, many Dutch merchants established themselves in England.

43. 15 Cains and Abels, etc. See a Bible dictionary for these Scriptural references.

48. 21 Ward. The officers of the ward, one of the divisions of the City of London.

49. 11 Wise Men. See Gospel of Matthew II. 1-12.

Stave 2. page 52. 29, First of Exchange. Debits and credits in the business world are often settled without the actual transfer of money by documents known as bills of exchange. These bills are drawn in duplicate or triplicate, 1st, 2nd, 3rd of exchange. When one is accepted, the others are void.

53. 1 United States Security. At the time when this story was written several of the states had repudiated their bonds, and had thus weakened United States credit abroad.

- 18. 29 Ali Baba.** Hero of *The Forty Thieves*, one of the tales from "The Arabian Nights." Accidentally learning the magic words "Open Sesame," he gained entrance to the robbers' cave and carried off their treasure.
- 18. 33 Valentine and Orson.** An old romance of the time of the Emperor Charlemagne. Orson and Valentine were twin sons of the Emperor of Constantinople. The former was carried off by a bear and lived uncouthly in the forest; Valentine grew up at the court of King Pepin.
- 18. 35 Gate of Damascus.** Bedreddin Hassin, in the Arabian Nights' tale of that name, married the princess; while the Hunchback who had sought her hand was seized by the genie and "set against the wall with his head downward until sunrise."
- 9. 11 Robin Crusoe.** Robinson Crusoe, the hero of Daniel Defoe's famous story, was shipwrecked on an uninhabited island, where he lived many years with his man Friday and his Parrot.
- 34. 9 Sir Roger de Coverley.** A dance like the Virginia reel, named for the courtly old gentleman whom Addison created in the pages of the "Spectator."
- 79. 19 Bob.** A shilling (Slang). Note the play on words.
- Save 3. page 74. 2. Twelfth Cakes.** Twelfth cakes were made for the feast of the Epiphany, or Twelfth Night (twelve days after Christmas). In them was placed a bean, and whoever chanced to get the piece containing it was made "King of the Bean," and presided over the boisterous games of Twelfth Night.
- Save 5. page 114. 23. Laocoön.** A Trojan priest of Apollo, who with his two sons was destroyed by two serpents sent from the sea by a goddess unfriendly to Troy. The group in marble (now in the Vatican at Rome) represents the serpents colling about their victims.
- 16. 14 Walker.** A slang term of incredulity. It is of uncertain origin.
- 16. 24 Joe Miller.** An English comic actor, d. 1738. He is said never to have made a joke, but a book of jests (pub. 1739) was wrongly attributed to him. A stale joke is known as a "Joe Miller."

THE WRECK OF THE GOLDEN MARY

- 22. 19 Penrith.** An ancient market town in N. W. England.
- 22. 24 Gold in California.** Discovered in 1849.
- 23. 17 Poplar.** A district in the east end of London where there are many docks; among others that of the famous East India Company.
- 23. 32 Leadenhall street.** Continues Cornhill (see p. 40); here was situated the old House of the East India Company.
- . 27 Pall Mall.** The centre of fashionable club-life in London.

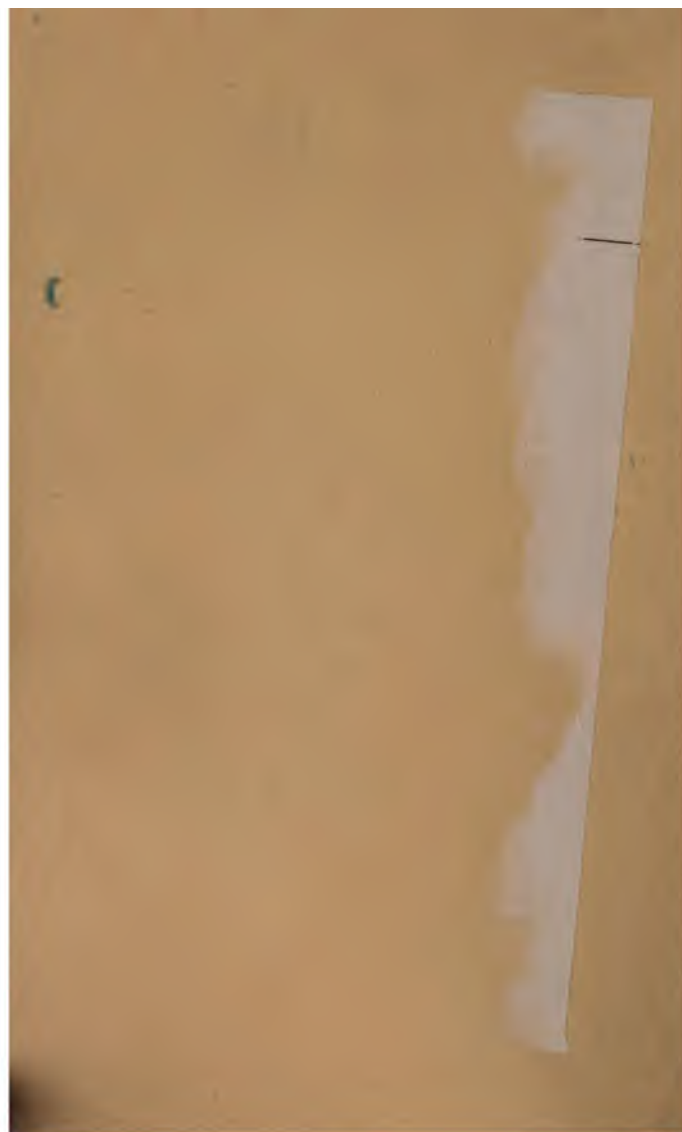
RICHARD DOUBLEDICK

- 177. 3 Chatham and Rochester.** Chatham, situated on the Medway river in Kent, is one of the principal naval arsenals and military stations of Great Britain. Rochester is continuous with Chatham but unlike Chatham, is a quiet, old-fashioned place, dating its foundation from British times.
- 177. 11 To take King George's shilling.** A man who wished to enlist as a soldier took a shilling from the recruiting officer as a sign of enlistment. This practice was disallowed by an Act of 1879.
- 177. 22 Regiment of the line.** An infantry regiment.
- 182. 6 Mars.** The Roman god of war.
- 182. 10 Trafalgar.** The great English naval victory over the French, October, 1805.
- 182. 24 Peninsular War.** The series of campaigns carried on from 1808 to 1814 in Spain, Portugal, and southern France against Napoleon. Wellesley (afterwards Duke of Wellington) commanded the English forces.
- 182. 25 Badajoz.** A town of S. W. Spain captured by Wellington in April, 1812.
- 184. 8 Toulouse.** By 1814 Wellington had fought his way into southern France. On April 10, the day before Napoleon signed his abdication, the victorious English general, ignorant of what was happening in Paris, fought and won the battle of Toulouse.
- 184. 25 He was the only son.** See Luke VII., 11-15.
- 185. 31 Quatre Bras and Ligny.** In June, 1815, the armies of Europe fought in the Netherlands their last great battles against Napoleon. On June 10 the Emperor defeated the Prussians at Ligny; at the same time Marshal Ney, his brilliant cavalry leader, was fighting a drawn battle with the English at Quatre Bras. On June 18 the whole French army met the English under Wellington, aided by the Prussians under Blücher, on the field of Waterloo just outside of Brussels (the English headquarters). Napoleon was so overwhelmingly defeated that he abdicated his throne and surrendered to the English by whom he was sent a prisoner for life to the island of St. Helena. The battle of Waterloo has been a fascinating theme to novelists and poets. Read the description of the battle in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, chapters 65-78; of the scenes in Brussels in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, chapters 30-32, and in Byron's poem *Waterloo*, from *Childe Harold*, canto III., stanzas 21-23.
- 189. 34 Avignon.** A town of southern France on the Rhone. From 1309 to 1376 the popes lived here under the control of the French kings.
- 190. 11 Aix.** N. E. of Avignon. Both these towns date from Roman times.
- 191. 7 Aladdin's Palace.** In the tale of Aladdin, or *The Wonderful Lamp*, in the *Arabian Nights*, the hero's palace, built in a single night by the genie, contained a hall in which there were "four and twenty windows decorated with jewels."

THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH

- rep the First. page 195. 9. **Haymaker.** Clocks on which figures moved at regular intervals were not uncommon two generations ago. See a description of the clock in the Cathedral of Strassburg for an elaborate piece of mechanism of this sort.
- 3 **First proposition of Euclid.** Euclid, a Greek geometer of the fourth century B. C., whose "Elements" are largely used in text books of geometry. The pattens made impressions which resembled over-lapping circles, suggestive of the figure used in demonstrating the first proposition of Euclid.
- 27 **Royal George.** An English man-of-war, which, while being refitted at Spithead, 1782, sank with nearly 800 people (sailors, marines, and visitors), on board. Efforts which were made to raise the ship brought up only fragments.
- 8 **Burden of the song.** A chorus repeated at the end of each stanza; e. g. "O tidings of comfort and joy" in the carol referred to on p. 39.
- 18 **Carrier.** A carrier of parcels—a forerunner of the modern express company.
- 31 **Tilly Slowboy.** The odd names so frequent in Dickens's stories are probably not inventions of his fancy, but actual names discovered by the author in his rambles about London.
- 22 **You're such an undeniable good sleeper . . . other six are.** In the third century during a persecution of the Christians, seven Christian youths of Ephesus hid themselves in a cave, where they slept safely for three hundred and sixty years, until Christianity had become the religion of the Roman Empire. See S. Baring-Gould: "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages."
- 1 **Golden South Americas.** The search for fortune in the New World began with the discovery of gold in Mexico and South America in the sixteenth century.
- 25 **Household Gods.** The protecting deities of the home; in this case the Cricket and the Kettle.
- rep the Second. page 236. 28. **Turnpike Trust.** Had under its supervision the making and repairing of roads on which turnpikes and toll-gates were established by law in order that passing vehicles might be stopped until toll was paid. (For the derivation of turnpike, see Cent. Dict.). Read Hawthorne's "A Toll-Gatherer's Day."
- 17 **Welsh Giant.** See the story of "Jack the Giant-killer,"





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